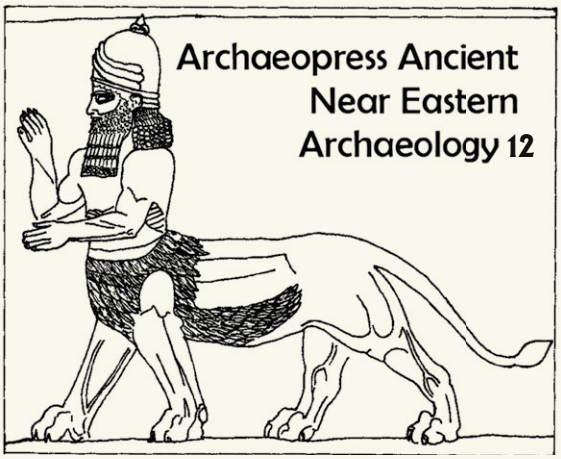
MORTALS, DEITIES AND DIVINE SYMBOLS



Rethinking Ancient Imagery from the Levant to Mesopotamia

Studies offered to Tallay Ornan

Edited by

Benjamin Sass
and Laura Battini

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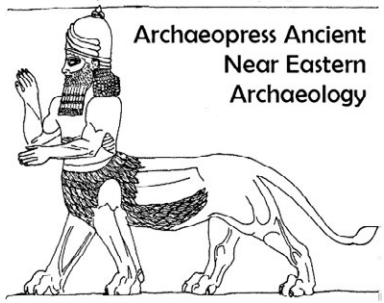

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Preface

This book was born out of Benjamin Sass and Tallay Ornan's half-century friendship and of desire to celebrate an exemplary research and teaching career at a time when teaching stops and research continues. Tallay contributed to recharging iconological research by giving it a new depth, firstly regarding the interconnections between Mesopotamia and the Levant and second by broadening the spectrum of meanings. She facilitated for several generations of scholars the understanding of visual language and provided effective methodologies. Her friendship is precious and free: you can discuss anything with her.

The idea of offering these writings was suggested by Yosef Garfinkel, Head of the Departement in Jerusalem faculty, Yigael Yadin Chair in Archaeology of Israel, to Benjamin Sass in 2021, the year Tallay retired from the university. Benjamin proposed to Laura that they work together and the first invitations went out in September 2021 through December.

On 13 and 14 October 2021, the Hertog Center for the Archaeological Research of Jerusalem and Judah at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem organized a conference held in honour of Prof. Tallay Ornan's and Prof. Ilan Sharon's retirement. The theme of the conference was *On Artists, Masons and Authority Ploys: Power and Symbolism in Judah and the Coast*. Five people participating in this book were present: Benjamin Sass, Laura Battini, Marian Feldman Claudia Suter and Irit Ziffer. Apart from Benjamin's, the four other lectures were reworked to appear in this book. Benjamin's chapter is a new one, written with Ethan Levy.

In June 2022, following an agreement with the publisher Archaeopress and in order to leave part of the manuscripts available to colleagues, Benjamin and Laura opened an online site dedicated to the pre-prints of Tallay Ornan's Festschrift (https://huji.academia.edu/FestschriftTALLAYORNANPREPRINTS). The first pre-print appeared in July 2022, the last in February 2024. In total, 12 pre-prints were edited, approved by the respective authors and published on the online site. They were only intended to save the first contributors the wait for the actual publication of the volume. The site is still active.

In 2022 and 2023, funds were obtained to help publish this book: the generosity of the Marie Becker Fund at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and the Fondation Hugot of the Collège de France, enabled George Metcalf to enrich the English of numerous papers, and enabled him and Daniela Dunoyer to improve the homogeneity of the book, and to make the Archaeopress digital offprints of the volume free of charge (Gold open access).

The book treats a panoply of aspects of ancient Western Asia and reflects above all of Tallay Ornan's central academic interests in 44 chapters written by scholars from all over the world.

Paris, 20 September 2024
Benjamin Sass and Laura Battini

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This book could not have been published without the help of numerous people. We would like to start with the people who, by responding positively to our invitation, have enabled us to prepare this book for our dear friend Tallay. Moreover, we should like to thank those colleagues who were unable to write an article but agreed to serve on the scientific committee:

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Our publishing house has always been very accommodating with all our questions and we are very happy to be able to work with them. In particular we would like to thank the older team (David Davidson and Rajka Makjanic) and the new one (Ben Heaney, Mike Schurer and Erin McGowan): the book, started under David and Rajka, and was prepared and published by Ben, Mike and Erin. Thank you so much!

Last not least, we are very grateful to the foundations that supported our project:

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Fondation Hugot (Collège de France, Paris)

Introduction

Tallay Ornan was born and raised in Jerusalem in a secular, highly culturally and politically engaged family, for whom the long and rich history of the Hebrew language was always central. In 1983 Tallay married Shimon Bigelman, who passed away in 2016; they had two children, Naama and Nadav, and Tallay now has two grandchildren, Yael and Zohar. Tallay studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for her Bachelor and Master's degrees in archaeology, history, and Assyriology. In her academic education, Tallay combined the archaeology and imagery of Israel/Palestine alongside Western Asia, focusing on Mesopotamian history, visuals, and languages. Ornan's doctoral thesis, written in Hebrew at Tel Aviv University, was supervised by Prof. Pirhiya Beck. In her thesis Ornan addressed 1st millennium BCE Assyro-Babylonian inspiration on south-Levantine glyptic. Part of her thesis' conclusions led to her book, *The Triumph of the Symbol* (OBO 213, 2005). In this book, Tallay proposed that the biblical second commandment, banning Israel from worshiping the image of Yahweh, was likely inspired by the contemporary Mesopotamian tendency to represent human-perceived divinities in nonanthropomorphic emblems.

Ornan's work is characterized inter alia by insights on the religions of Ancient Western Asia, stemming from a 'reading' of the region's imagery. In this she was inspired by the work of Othmar Keel. Often her studies fit into a broader picture of the archaeological and iconographical discoveries in the Levant and the rest of ancient Western Asia, on their historical and biblical backgrounds. Here are examples of central aspects of her work.

- Kings. A number of specialists believe that certain kings of ancient Western Asia were deified. Against them Ornan accentuated in her work that such deification was hardly documented - neither dead kings, nor certainly living ones. A dead king could be considered an intermediary between the divine and human worlds, however.
- Anthropomorphic perception of the gods and goddesses. Whereas the deities were often represented by their emblems in Ancient Western Asian imagery, they were always anthropomorphic in the believers' perception (Ornan 2009).
- Text versus image. This complex issue is one of Ornan's chief contributions to the study of ancient Western Asian imagery. She rather puts an emphasis on the differences. Certain aspects of the divine world find expression in images, others in texts, and only rarely in both (Ornan 2010). The evaluation of the cultural and religious characteristics of the region are typically founded on a weighting of the two, rather than on attempting to harmonize them.
- Relationships between Canaan/Israel and Ancient Western Asia. Ornan sees the imagery of Canaan/Israel in the second and first millennium as an integral part of Ancient Near Eastern imagery, rather than setting Israel apart on account of the second commandment.

From 1984 to 1992 Ornan held the position of the Curator of the Palestine Archaeological Museum in East Jerusalem (known as the Rockefeller Museum) on behalf of the Israel Museum. From 1993 to 2008, she was the Curator of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the Israel Museum. From the early 2000s, she taught at the Hebrew University, where, in 2008, she became Associate Professor with tenure in the Departments of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and Art History. Tallay retired in 2021.

This book is dedicated to Tallay Ornan, a scholar who has profoundly impacted iconographic research in ancient Western Asia. Her unfailing friendship makes life better.

The book is divided into three parts. Each contains chapters arranged in alphabetical order of the authors' names, that we feel gives greater prominence to Tallay Ornan's major themes. The first part is devoted to ***New Materials and Approaches*** in twelve chapters. Six consider new approaches to ancient materials (Bachvarova, Dolce, Feldman, Franklin, Portuese, Selz), and six chapters study new materials (Arie, Garcia-Ventura, Gubel, Niederreiter, Sass and Levy, Schroer).

Two of these chapters are theorical (Dolce, Feldman). Marian Feldman focuses on the naturalism of Akkadian art ("Naturalism, photography, and empire in the Old Akkadian period"). Akkadian royal art has been celebrated for its apparent naturalism and realism since its identification by scholars in the late nineteenth century. Feldman proposes that our conceptualization of the Akkadian dynasty can be traced in part to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century associations between imperialism, photography, and naturalism. On the other hand, Rita Dolce ("Ancient images in Mesopotamia: Ancient gaze and present observation

between visual sources and textual sources. Questions and limitations") considers the relationships between texts and images in Ancient Western Asia. The images should not be viewed as subordinate nor as complementary to written documents, but as independent and significant as the texts. Images are a language, understood at a primary level by anyone. The other levels of understanding depend on individual knowledge.

This concept is present also in the chapter by Gebhard Selz ("How meaning evolves. Proto-cuneiform signs: considerations on their origins at the intersection of visual and oral communication"). Proto-cuneiform signs combine features of visual and oral communication. In a word, writing concerns sight - spatially oriented- and hearing - temporally oriented. Both domains are based on the same procedures and are essential factors in the process of signification, as some selected examples prove (the cases of TUN_3, EZEM/EZEN, LAM, */zabar/* and the case of the "standards" $MUŠ_3$, URI_3 and ŠEŠ). Another chapter has an important theoretical part based on the study of 'etiquette'. Ludovico Portuese ("Gods, rulers, and death: Nonverbal expressions and group identity in Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian monumental art") analyses nonverbal expressions –such as gestures, body movements, proxemic, and the like– in order to understand their political, religious, identitarian significances. He provides an examination and comparison of visual representations of submission and drinking gestures in Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian monumental art, in order to highlight the ways in which these visual motifs were rejected or were appropriated and re-instrumentalized by both parties. Lastly, Mary Bachvarova ("Articulating foundation myths in Milesian festivals: A diachronic perspective") considers the polis history of conflict among ethnic groups at Miletus in a diachronical and multi-factor analysis using literary, archaeological, and inscriptional evidence for sanctuaries in the Milesian chora.

The six last chapters of part one present new materials or old forgotten finds considered with new approaches. Eran Arie ("Closed case: an Iron Age trove of jewellery from the Israel Museum collection and the identification of its provenance at Tel 'Ira (Israel)") present a jewellery group stored in the Israel Museum and tries to deduce its origin. Tracing the findspot of antiquities from the market with such precision is not very common. Moreover, this rare discovery enhances our understanding of Tel 'Ira and its cemetery. Eric Gubel ("New gleanings at the temples of Sidon, Tyre and Jerusalem–Decoding Phoenician Art – II") analyses a bowl from Nimrud rejecting its common interpretation (four identical Phoenician shrines), and suggesting an apparatus ensuring the fixation of textile on a rod between the capitals of the structure's supporting columns. Consequently, the composition featuring antithetical winged, hawk-headed, sphinxes (Phoenician and Hebrew *Kerubim*) evokes not the presence of a cult statue, but the embroidered design of temple curtains known from Biblical descriptions and documented by Canaanite and Phoenician model shrines. Agnes Garcia-Ventura ("The reception of the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in Spain: From a treatise on ophthalmology to a white plaster cast") shows the importance of casts for the diffusion of the knowledge of the Mesopotamia in Spain. Thanks to the casts, Mesopotamia began to take its place in the imaginary of an Antiquity hitherto populated, basically, by Greek and Roman material culture and written sources. Norma Franklin ("A reassessment: is the cone-shaped object held by the genii in Assurnasirpal's palace at Kalhu a citron?") analyses a well-known and long-discussed conical object held by the genii in Assurnasipal's palace reliefs. Remembering the most common interpretation of this scene (pollination of the sacred tree by a pinecone held by genii), she proposes to identify the cone as a fruit and to connect the scene to a purification. The Assyrians called the cone-shaped object a purifier (*mullilu*), and pharmacological research has shown that the citron has important purification and medicinal properties. Silvia Schroer ("The impact of models and prototypes in carving and sculpturing. How craftspeople referred to prototypes and conventions. Two examples") studies the craftmen's work taking as example an ivory spoon from Beth-zur (in Judah) and a ceramic plaque from Tall al-Zira'a (Jordan). The objects show how an apprentice learned elementary skills by imitating a model on the same material, and how a more advanced craftman imitates monumental and large-scale art. The last two chapters are devoted to glyptic. Benjamin Sass and Eythan Levy present two inscribed bullae found at Samaria in the 1933 campaign ("Inscribed bullae from the Samaria excavations forgotten for ninety years"). One of the bullae bears an Egyptian name written in the Hebrew alphabet-variant, while the attribution of the signs on the other remains questionable. Zoltán Niederreiter ("The imagery of the Neo-Assyrian seals belonging to the palace. An interpretation of the scene on a stamp seal formerly kept in the Southesk collection") analyses the significance of a Neo-Assyrian stamp seal. Its importance lies not only in its decorative features but also in the study of the work of the artisans, the demands of their patrons, and the role played by the Assyrian scholars in the conception of its iconography.

The second part, ***The Human World***, consists of 14 chapters. One of the major topics is the figure of the king, to which six chapters are dedicated. Four of them concern first–millennium Mesopotamian kings (Dalley, Masetti-Rouault, May, Da Riva), the two others the Pharaon (David, Ben-Tor and Keel). Stephanie Dalley ("Sennacherib's open-air sanctuary at Khinis /

Bavian: quarries, quarry workers, recarved panels and polylithic bulls") focuses on this open-air sanctuary and its environs. The Bavian Inscription indicates that the sanctuary guarded against interference from Urartu, protecting the supply of water to the plain of Nineveh. Natalie Naomi May ("Whose head is hanging from the tree?") deconstructs the identification of the head hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal as the head of his enemy, the Elamite king Te'umman. The author gives a new interpretation : this head belongs to another and much more hated enemy of the Assyrian king, the traitor Nabû-bēl-šumāti, whose dead body Ashurbanipal ordered to decapitate.

Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault ("The image of the city as a symbol and scene in Assyrian representation") focuses on the contraddiction between the importance of the city in Assyrian royal inscriptions, and its near-absence in the palace bas reliefs. The question is even more challenging when this absence is set against the presence of enemy cities in monumental contexts at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. It is suggested that the Assyrian courtisans could identify some mute and linear urban forms as a representation of their own city, and themselves in the (revolting/resisting) enemy. The reliefs show eventually that the king's power controls and is ready to destroy not only the enemies, but whoever opposes it. Rocío Da Riva ("On the elusive Babylonian royal seal") questions the apparent absence of Neo-Babylonian royal seals, despite the political and symbolic importance of royal seals in Mesopotamia. The only example of royal glyptic, dating from the reign of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, is surprising in its iconography: it depicts the king of Babylonia, armed with a sickle sword, fighting a wild goat. The chapter analyses the implications of the iconographic motif and its symbolic connotations with the aim of improving our understanding of Babylonian royal ideology during the first millennium BCE.

The two chapters on the figure of the pharaoh concern the New Kingdom and especially the period of the apogee of power. Daphna Ben Tor and Otmar Keel ("Ideological differences between representations of the pharaoh during the 18th and 19th dynasties reflected on scarabs and stamp-seals") examine the 18th and 19th dynasties and how royal representations on seals changed over the course of these dynasties. During all periods of Egyptian history, representations of the pharaoh were present everywhere and influenced by ideological notions. The choice to consider their glyptic representations is explained by the fact that they are an important vector for disseminating the ideologies associated with the king. Arlette David ("Akhenaten's divine crop") focuses on the representation of King Amenhotep IV, better known as Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BCE). This pharaoh had reliefs carved on his monuments depicting him and his Queen bowed over sheaves of grain, possibly cutting them. This image, probably suggested by ancient Heliopolitan beliefs and by harvest celebrations such as the Festival of Renenutet, is a new creation of Akenaten, who wanted to celebrate the abundance of natural resources unde the god Aten and his own kingdom and to exalt the royal power over the enemies of Egypt. This image influences the Ramesside depictions of the king cutting a sheaf at the temple during the Min Festival or harvesting in the Field of Rushes in the Afterlife.

Another important theme in the second part is women, to which six chapters are devoted. Three concern women in the Levant (Caubet, Cornelius, and Hasegawa and Mito) and three in Mesopotamia (Nunn, Piening and Saladin Segovia, Herbordt and Ben-Ami). Annie Caubet addresses "The Lady at the window from Arslan Tash" focusing on the Lady at the window. She rejects the common interpretation of the motif as an allusion to sacred prostitution associated with the cult of Astarte. After tracing the motif back to late Bronze Age Syria and Mycenaean Cyprus, and focusing on certain texts from Ugarit that mention an "Athtart of the window", she interprets the motif as one of many images linked to royal ideology influenced by Egypt, where the practice of displaying the royal couple was introduced in the Amarna period. The theme has been exceptionally successful, and has undergone various mutations, forms and meanings over time.

Izak Cornelius ("Revisiting the seated figure on wall painting No. 9 from Kuntillet Ajrud once again") gives a new interpretation of the seated painted figure from building A at Kuntillet Ajrud. The figure holds something in the hands (a lotus or cup) and can be identified as an enthroned ruler (cf. banquet scenes) or an elite woman, perhaps a queen holding a cup, a lotus, or even a spindle. Another article on the Iron Age of the Southern Levant is by Shuichi Hasegawa and Shizuka Mito ("Two Iron Age female figurines from Tel Rekhesh"). The authors publish two female terracotta figurines from Tel Rekhesh, both holding a disc, a common motif in the Iron Age II southern Levant. After analysing the distribution of this theme, which trascendes political borders, the authors discuss the reason for its wide circulation.

The three articles on Mesopotamian women are quite different. One is an example of experimental archaeology. Astrid Nunn, Heinrich Piening and Becca Saladin Segovia ("Back to life. On a lifelike female statue head from Assur") had replicas of a famous female stone head from Assur in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, printed and painted, reproducing the colors, traces of which were found on the original head after examination under a microscope. This experiment is part of the project "Mesopotamian Sculpture in Colour". The authors have also reconstructed this head using artificial intelligence and photo compositing

techniques to see what this woman probably looked like in life.

The two other chapters deal with gender issues. Suzanne Herbordt ("In the sign of the scorpion. The administrative seals of the Neo-Assyrian queen and the queen's household") analyses a group of official seals of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace administration at Nineveh. Each seal bears the image of a scorpion surrounded by either a guilloche, a garland, or simply the imprint of the seal mount as sole motif. The common interpretation as the administrative seal of the Assyrian queen is therefore confirmed. Débora V. Ben-Ami ("The threat of the women warriors: From the Arab women to the Amazons") is interested in one of the most difficult bas-reliefs by Assurbanipal. It is generally interpreted as a massacre of Arab women. The author suggests that the message conveyed by this extremely cruel act of punishment is rooted in a perception of gender. The behaviour of Arab women, who adopted active masculine behaviour during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, undermined and threatened the cultural order between the sexes. Consequently, the Assyrians' unique and extreme cruelty towards them must be seen as an ideological statement, a warning to men against any deviation by women from the norm. This episode may well have inspired Greek literature and mythology (the myth of the Amazons).

Finally, two chapters of the second part are consecrated to mortals. Dominik Bonatz ("In a masked world: on the physiognomy of Assyrian faces") analyses the Assyrian physiognomy, which apparently does not change for more than three centuries. The uniformity of faces carved in relief or as sculptures in the round demonstrates a constructed reality, which hides individual identities. Therefore, the relation between the face and its mask will be another central aspect to think about in Neo-Assyrian monumental art. Ran Zadok ("A preliminary survey of the documentation from Dilbat and several other places in central and northern Babylonia chiefly during the long 6th century BCE") publishes an important corpus of 90 texts from Dilbat between 626 and 484 BCE, plus 12 texts from central and northern Babylonia. 83 of these texts have never been published. Most of the texts belong to the British Museum, 17 to the Horn Museum of Andrews University, and five to the Yale Babylonian collection. These texts shed new light on the town of Dilbat in the 1st mill. BCE.

The third and last part – ***The Divine World*** –consists of 18 chapters. It has two main themes: anthropomorphic deities and divine symbols. Ten chapters are devoted to the first theme and eight to the second. The theme of gods is dealt with from a textual point of view (Abusch and Wright, Katz, Na'aman, Rendu-Loisel) or from an iconographic and textual perspective (Battini, Bloch, Garrison, Hazan, Kisilevitz, Agnon, Gedulter and Lipschits, and Ziffer).

The chapters by Na'aman, and Abusch and Wright concern the Levant, while those by Katz and Rendu-Loisel focus on Mesopotamia. After presenting the history of Ataroth's sanctuary, from Moabite to Israelite and later from Israelite to Moabite domination and clarifing the significance of these transformations for the sanctuary and its patron gods, Nadav Na'aman ("The sanctuary of Ataroth and its inscriptions") discusses in detail the two inscriptions incised on a cylindrical stone altar that were discovered in the Moabite sanctuary of the late 9th century BCE. He offers a new interpretation for the inscriptions, which were intended to commemorate the contributions made by five towns and a tribe in an effort to help maintain the recently restored Moabite sanctuary after a short period of abandonment.

Tzvi Abusch and David Wright ("The meaning and sense of the Ugaritic Baal–Mot conflict narrative") provide a detailed review of the story and reflect on the meaning of the conflict between Baal and Mot. The authors try also to define the place of the existing elements in the plot and to imagine how they may connect. An excursus examines the operation of ritual motifs in the story. Another chapter on mythology is provided by Dina Katz ("The tale of "Nergal and Ereškigal" revisited"). This tale is, essentially, a succession myth clad in psychological discourse of rivalry, desire and deception, hate and love in the realm of death. The striking similarities with and differences between the two sources of the text (Middle Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian versions) leave important questions unsolved, that Dina Katz pursues here. Are the two versions based on one and the same Old Babylonian tradition or on two different ones? How did a Neo-Assyrian scribe elaborate and expand the text fourfold? What was the purpose and function of each version? What is the contribution of the intertextual relations with the myths of Inana's descent and Ištar's descent?

Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel ("Beyond the visible. Feeling the divine presence in ancient Mesopotamia") pursues the investigation on the symbolic world Tallay Ornan has embarked on. She considers the sensory effects that are created in the ritual scene thanks to various elements and substances described in Akkadian epigraphic sources of the 2nd and 1st millennium BCE. All these non-verbal communication pin down the divine.

Of the other six chapters about gods according to iconographic and textual data, three are based on Mesopotamian glyptic from the Akkadian (Battini),

Kassite (Bloch) and Neo-Babylonian periods (Garrison). The chapter by Laura Battini ("A confidential message: Divine fight and death in a forgotten Akkadian seal of Ur") focuses on a unique seal representing a dead god carried by the god who killed him. This violent representation can be read on various levels. At the simplest level, it is a divine battle that finds echoes in Mesopotamian cosmogony. At a more complex level, it is about the advent of a new age that coincides with the death of the god and the subjugation of men and is guaranteed by Šamaš. That the seal also alludes to the birth of a new political epoch desired by the Akkadian dynasty seems a triviality. But the seal also has a clear apotropaic value, which results from the choice of the natural colours of the stone for the different subjects: for the dead god, the lapidary used the black vein of the stone, for the other subjects he used the white vein.

Yigal Bloch ("Three Kassite seals in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem") publishes these seals, containing prayer and incantation formulas, intended to secure the gods' favour for the seal owners, an aspect accentuated by the inscriptions' physical prominence versus the pictorial scenes. This can be understood as part of a general shift from official to personal religion in Kassite Babylonia. Another chapter concerning Mesopotamian glyptic is by Mark Garrison ("The late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis"). The author analyses a group of Neo-Babylonian worship scenes found in the impressions on administrative tablets from Persepolis. They represent a worshipper before divine symbols that rest on pillared pedestals. The impressions from Persepolis raise numerous issues regarding the chronology, and the iconographic and stylistic development of the scene in the Late Babylonian archives and the cultural interaction between Iran and Babylonia in the middle of the first millennium BCE.

Seals are one of the sources of the chapter by Irit Ziffer ("Their god is a god of mountains (1 Kings 20:23). Topographic imagery in pictorial art"). The author analyses mountain gods, because of the links between mountains and the sky/heaven/divine/*ziqqurat*. The article traces the development of visual images of mountain gods, and attempts their identification. Finally, it suggests that the ancient Israelites were familiar with the visuals of the mountain god.

Two other chapters pursue the divine theme. Clement Hazan ("A new look at the Hittite silver vessel in the shape of a fist") deals with Anatolian divine representation. He focuses on a silver vessel in the form of a fist, today at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which represents a god difficult to identify. Combining iconographic and textual data, the author proposes to identify the deity with Teššub of Aleppo. Shua Kisilevitz, Amotz Agnon, Nuphar Gedulter and Oded Lipschits ("In his image: god or ruler? A stone relief from the iron IIA cultic precinct at Tel Moẓa") examine a broken stone relief recently discovered in the precinct's foundations of the large temple at Tel Motsa, near Jerusalem, dated to the early Iron Age. The relief was originally part of the early temple and depicted an important figure, likely a ruler or deity, and then it was deliberatly broken and ritually buried to transfer the sanctity and power of the old temple to the new one. These ritual practices observed at Motsa suggest a broader mirroring of cultic patterns from the northern Levant to the Iron Age southern Levent than previously discerned.

Eight chapters are dedicated to divine symbols. Four concern Mesopotamia, one Egypt and three the Levant. Paul Collins ("Revisiting an exorcist's seal in the Ashmolean Museum") focuses on a cylinder seal found in 1922 and lent to the Ashmolean Museum by a British army officer. The seal is in fact a modern fake and one of a number of objects inspired by the narratives presented on ancient Lamaštu amulets. Baruch Brandl ("The symbol of the triumph") analyses a Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal representing a worshipper in front of divine symbols. He retraces its origin to a Neo-Assyrian workshop probably active under Sargon II. Uri Gabbay ("Gods and birds in ancient Mesopotamia") adresses various types of relationships between gods and birds, considering different environments in Mesopotamia (riverbanks and marshes; remote mountains; cities). The article also discusses the ways in which birds were understood by ancient Mesopotamian scholars to represent the divine world. Lastly, Nathan Wasserman ("A ceremonial mace-head with dedicatory inscription of the Old Akkadian period") deals with an unprovenanced mace-head with an old Akkadian inscription. The mace-head is probably genuine, of a northern Syrian origin and can be dated to the Early Old Babylonian period. The inaccurate execution of some signs is to be attributed to an inexperienced scribe. The use of separators may be explained as a "peripheral" scribal practice, for the macehead originated out of Mesopotamia.

The chapter dedicated to Egypt by Michael Sebbane ("The hunters' palette") presents the late Predynastic arsenal through the reliefs on this so-called cosmetic palette, in fact a monument. In these palettes, the weapons consist of simple double-curbed bows, arrows with horizontal chisel-shaped heads, various types of maces, boomerangs, lances and javelins. The detailed manner of execution, showing for example a raised midrib on the lance heads, even makes it possible to deduce the material they were made of, in this particular case metal, probably copper. On a wider perspective, the two groups of hunter-warriors on the palette reflect the political and ideological messages that the palette set out to immortalize and transmit — power, authority, and government.

The last three chapters deal with the Levant. Claudia Suter ("The repertoire of motifs and their composition on ivory furniture from Samaria. An updated inventory and reflections on Egyptianizing trends in Ancient Israel") analyses the Samaria ivories, the largest assemblage of Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age. Except for one small-scale object, the Samaria assemblage comprises mainly plaques and fittings that most probably decorated luxury furniture used by the kings of Israel and their entourage. Ruhama Bonfil and Robert Bonfil (" 'I have set My bow in the cloud' – symbolism and myth") examine the symbol of the bow in Western Asia and the Bible. The bow, employed in battle and hunt, is also linked to the rainbow, representing a metaphor for the covenant between God and humans. Yosef Garfinkel ("For whom the bell tolls: Horse harnesses at Megiddo and beyond") studies bronze bells from Megiddo, compared with those found in Cyprus, Assyria, Urartu, and northwestern Iran. These small bells should be associated with horse harnesses where bells are suspended from the horses' necks.

May Tallay enjoy these contributions and be proud of this book!

Photographic Souvenirs of Tali's Career

1991. Discussing seal impressions with graphic artist Noga Z'evi in Jerusalem.

1994. Dwarfed beside a *lahmu* from Khorsabad at the Louvre.

2007. River Euphrates, Kenk Gorge.

2007. At Karatepe North Gate.

2008. Teaching at the Hebrew University about the enthroned Baʿal from Hazor.

2008. With Nadav Na'aman and friends at his anniversary celebrations in Ramat Rahel.

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FIRST PART:
NEW MATERIALS AND APPROACHES

Chapter 1:
Closed case:
An Iron Age trove of jewellery from the Israel Museum collection and the identification of its provenance at Tel ʻIra (Israel)

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Abstract. A trove of artifacts, which is published here for the first time, was bought by the Israel Museum in 1985. It includes inter alia silver jewellery, comprising earrings, dozens of beads and more. Additional beads are made of semi-precious stones and glass. Some beads were still arranged as segments of necklaces strung on linen threads on arrival to the museum. A segment of a necklace from Tel ʻIra in the Negev (Israel) proved to be identical to some of the necklace segments in the trove. This surprising discovery, coupled with other clues, suggests that the entire museum's trove was looted from the Iron Age II eastern cemetery of Tel ʻIra. Tracing the findspot of antiquities from the market with such precision is not very common. Moreover, this rare discovery enhances our understanding of Tel ʻIra and its cemetery.

Keywords: jewellery, Iron Age, Tel ʻIra, archaeological looting, provenance studies, Museums' collections, Israel Museum.

This article is dedicated to Prof. Tallay Ornan, a teacher, a colleague and a good friend, who worked for some twenty years at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, the permanent house of the trove of artifacts reported here. I would like to thank Tallay for her continuous help and good advice through the years, and to wish her many more years of fruitful research and joyful discoveries.

Introduction

The trove of jewellery and other artifacts (hereafter, museum's trove), published in this article for the first time, was bought by the Israel Museum in 1985 from the Jerusalem antiquities dealer Rafi Brown.[1] It comprises silver jewellery - earrings, several dozens of beads and more - beads of semi-precious stones and glass, a bone pendant, a pierced cowrie shell, three alabaster objects and eight pottery vessels. The pottery and stone vessels were never on display, while most of the jewellery was sent on several traveling exhibitions (e.g., *Ancient Treasures and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Montreal and Ottawa, Canada, 2003–2004). The jewellery was registered in the museum's collection as "a silver hoard", and this is how it was labeled when exhibited. However, this definition was not based on any archaeological grounds, but rather on the interpretation of the curators who considered this assemblage to be a hoard. As these artifacts were robbed from an unknown archaeological site, their archaeological context seemed to be lost forever.

This article presents a detailed description of the group and, due to a rare combination of events, reveals the exact provenance of these artifacts, on the basis of solid evidence. The possibility of tracing a group of objects bought on the antiquities market to its original findspot is exceptional, and raises once again ethical questions related to the antiquities trade and cultural heritage that each archaeologist should be aware of.

The jewelry includes 75 beads made of silver, semi-precious stones and glass; four silver earrings; a complete finger-ring and a fragment of another, both made of silver; a bone pendant; and a pierced cowrie shell. Notably, all silver items –beads, earrings and finger-rings– had a thick green corrosion layer when they arrived at the museum (Figures 1–2, 7), attesting to their copper-rich silver alloy (see more below).[2]

Beads

The museum's trove contains 75 beads (reg. no. 85.5.45). Fifty-five beads are made of silver, eleven of carnelian, eight of glass and one of agate. The beads can be separated into four distinct groups on the basis of their sequences before cleaning, when they were still attached to each other by the corrosion materials, and some were still strung on their original threads (Tables 1–2; Figures 1–2). Today only eleven beads are

[1] The Committee who approved this acquisition included Prof. Nahman Avigad, Dr. Yaʻakov Meshorer and Yael Israeli. Michal Dayagi-Mendels was then curator of the Iron Age and Persian Period Department. The entire trove was bought on April 2nd, 1985. It was recorded in the registration book of the museum as reg. no. 85.5.

[2] After submitting this article, four silver items were analyzed using XRF to determine their composition. The main components are as follows: (1) Granule cluster earing, Figure 8:3: 86.30% Silver, 12.22% Copper and 1.07% Lead. (2) Barrel-shaped bead, Figure 4: First from left: 87.19% Silver, 11.19% Copper and 1.15% Lead. (3) Granulated cylinder bead, Figure 4: Forth from left: 76.03% Silver, 22.96% Copper and 0.631% Lead. (4) Granule bead, Figure 4: Thirty-seventh from left: 87.27% Silver; 11.46% Copper and 0.687% Lead.

Figure 1. Low resolution working photo of most of the beads on arrival at the museum. Bottom left: barrel-shaped silver beads of Group 3; top left: Segment 6 of Group 2; top right: four beads that were cleaned in the museum prior to taking this photo (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Ruhi Baharad).

Figure 2. Low resolution working photo of almost all of the beads of Group 1, on arrival at the museum. From bottom to top: Segment 1, Segment 2, Segment 3 (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Ruhi Baharad).

still strung on the original thread (Segment 1 of Beads Group 1; Figure 3). The others, from all four groups, were re-strung in the museum in 2003, in an arbitrary order on a modern linen thread (Figure 4).

Beads Group 1

Beads Group 1 is the biggest of the four groups and the most important for understanding the entire museum's trove. It consists of 37 beads: twenty-one silver granule beads, ten carnelian beads and six glass beads of two sub-types (see below). Each granule bead (Figures 3: 1; 4: 1) is made of an inner disk comprising eight granules; at each connection point between the granules an additional granule is soldered, forming a star-like disk or a cogwheel-shaped bead made of sixteen granules (Figure 5: 1). Hence, these beads are defined here as composite granule beads, in order to differentiate them from the regular granule beads that are made from only one disk of granules. A few of these beads lost a single granule through the years (e.g., Figure 1, center right). In average, the composite granule beads are heigh of 0.6 cm and wide of 0.1 cm. Regular granule beads, which are also known as granulated flower beads, are dated from the Late Bronze Age to the Persian Period (Herzog and Levy 1999: fig. 8: 36; Golani 2013: 186–187, beads type I.1; Verduci 2018: 154, type 5V.a). The best parallels of the composite granule beads were found in Persian Period contexts (Farhi 2014: fig. 14.2: c; Ashkenazi *et*

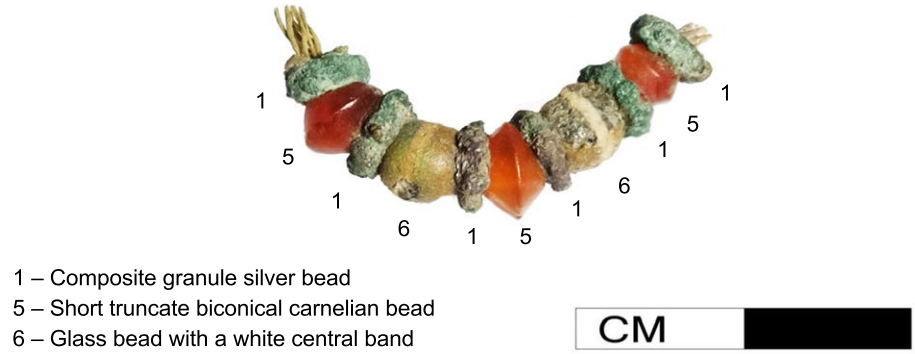

Figure 3. Necklace Segment 1 of Beads Group 1, consisting of eleven beads, in its present state. Each bead is numbered according to its classification (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

1 – Composite granule silver bead
2 – Granulated cylinder silver bead
3 – Barrel-shaped silver bead
4 – Plain cylindrical silver bead
5 – Short truncate biconical carnelian bead
6 – Glass bead with a white central band
7 – Glass bead with two white central bands
8 – Plain glass bead
9 – Pear-shaped glass pendant
10 – Agate bead
CM

Figure 4. The 64 cleaned beads strung on a modern thread in their present state. Each bead is numbered according to its classification (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

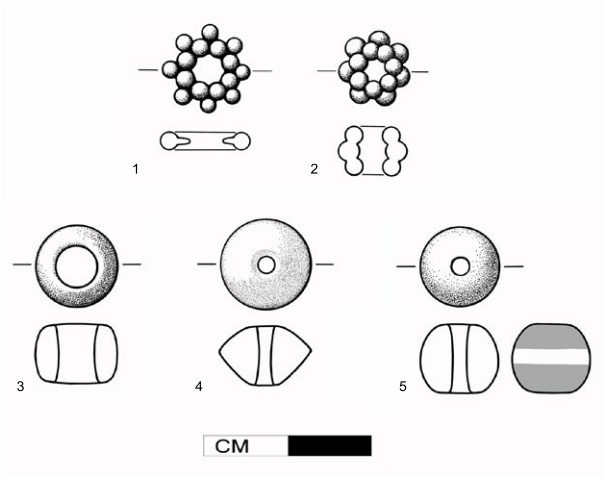

Figure 5. Selected beads: (1) Composite granule silver bead; (2) Granulated cylinder silver bead; (3) Barrel-shaped silver bead; (4) Short truncated biconical carnelian bead; (5) Gray glass bead with a white central band. Drawing © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Michael Smelansky.

al. 2017: fig. 3: f1–2; Gitler and Tal 2019: 113-115, pl. XL: J55-J74; Gitler and Tal 2020: 185, pl. 2: 19–22).

Ten short truncated biconical beads made of carnelian (Figures 3: 5; 4: 5) are part of this group (see one of them in Figure 5: 4). This type of bead is very frequent in the southern Levant over a long period, beginning in the Intermediate Bronze Age (Golani 2013: 194–195, beads type II.4). The average size of the beads from the museum's trove is 0.35 cm in height and 0.6 cm in width. An additional bead of this type is part of Beads Group 2 reported below.

The six glass beads of Beads Group 1 (Figures 3: 6; 4: 6) are made of five almost identical barrel-shaped gray beads with a white central band (Figure 5: 5). Two of them are broken and thus testify to the white band being a cane segment, which reaches the perforation (cf. Spaer 2011: 106–107, beads 135, 142). The average dimensions of these beads are 0.5 cm in height and 0.45 cm in width. Beads of this type are known from the Late Bronze Age to at least the Roman Period (*ibid.* 112, bead 164).

The last glass item of Group 1 is a yellowish-brown pear-shaped pendant-bead, with light brownish pale patina (Figure 4: 9). It is flat on the top and a chip at the lower part exposes its core. It represents a hybrid of two well-known forms, "lotus bud pendant" (Golani 2013: 165–166, pendants type II.4) and "pear-shaped bead" (*ibid.*: 208–209, beads type III.21). In spite of its rather small dimensions (height: 0.6 cm; width: 0.4 cm), its form attests to the possibility that it was used as the central pendant of the necklace. A close parallel, probably also made of glass, was found in a Persian-Period tomb at Tel Michal (Herzog and Levy 1999: fig. 8: 49).

Almost all of the beads of the first group arrived at the museum as segments of a necklace. Segments 1–3 (Figure 2) were still strung on an undyed beige linen thread, which was in an excellent state of preservation. The thread was a six-ply linen, strong enough to carry the weight of the beads. While Segments 2–3 were cleaned in the Israel Museum labs in 1985 and were separated from the original thread, Segment 1 was left untouched (Figure 3).[3] The thread was not preserved in three additional segments of Group 1 (Segments 4–6; each comprising two beads), and the beads were held together by the corrosion materials. In addition, five separate beads of types that appear in the segments – four composite granule beads and one carnelian bead – are considered here part of this group. Table 1 presents the composition of the beads in each segment.

Table 1. The composition of the necklace-segments of Beads Group 1

	Composite granule, silver	Biconical, carnelian	Central pendant, glass	Gray/white, glass	Total
Segment 1	6	3		2	11
Segment 2	5	3	1	1	10
Segment 3	3	2			5
Segment 4	1			1	2
Segment 5	1	1			2
Segment 6	1	1			2
Separated	4			1	5
Total	21	10	1	5	37

It seems that the necklace made of the Group 1 beads was arranged in a meticulous order. Every second bead was a composite granule silver one with glass and carnelian beads alternating between them. The glass pendant was probably located at the center of the necklace, flanked by composite granule silver beads.

[3] In the Metals and Organic Materials lab of the museum, I found a scathing conservation report that was written in 2003 by Ruhi Baharad, then a senior conservator (retired in 2013). It appears that in 1985 she was asked to separate and clean the beads of almost all the different segments (Beads Groups 1–3). When doing so, she kept the linen threads of the now cleaned segments. However, when in 2003 the entire group of jewellery arrived in the lab again before travelling to an exhibition in Canada, the original threads had been lost, and the long thread of Segment 1 was unprofessionally cut and shortened. Moreover, one of the silver earrings (Figure 8: 1) was broken, next to the old break, and required gluing.

In Segment 3, one of the carnelian/glass beads was lost, leaving a gap between two granule silver beads. Presumably one of the broken glass beads was there originally. Theoretically, beads from Groups 2 and 4 (see below) may have been part of this necklace, but due to the careful arrangement, I prefer to consider them to be part of a different necklace/s (and see more below).

Amazingly, I was able to find a segment of an exact similar necklace, in the excavation report of Tel 'Ira in the Negev (Figure 6; Kertesz 1999: figs. 14.32: 18, 14.33). It was found in Tomb 13, which was uncovered on the eastern slope of the mound (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: 146–149). The segment is made of nine beads and one additional separated granule bead was associated with it in the publication. Unfortunately, the segment not only was inadequately published (see below), but in spite of a thorough search in the Israel Antiquities Authority (hereafter IAA) storerooms in Beth-Shemesh, where it is recorded as reg. no. 2000–270, it was never found.

Kertesz (1999: 474) very briefly reports that three types of beads were strung together on a bronze wire: "a) six granulated disc beads made of frit ...; b) two circular ... carnelian red; c) two circular standard frit beads." However, since it is obvious from the photos in the publication and from the IAA card that the segment of necklace found in Tel 'Ira was never cleaned, Kertesz's ability to identify correctly the materials of the beads would have been limited. Moreover, in another place in the report the same necklace is described as being made of carnelian and metal beads (Beit-Arieh, Freud, and Baron 1999: 147). The same problem of identification is true for the bronze wire that Kertesz reported. Since the side-beads in her necklace segment are granule beads encrusted with green corrosion, one can assume that she interpreted this corrosion as coming from a wire, and not from what she identified as frit beads. Another clue that this segment of necklace was not strung on a bronze wire, is the photo of these beads on the old IAA card (negative no. 706255), which shows that when it was registered, the segment was broken into two. There is also no mention of a bronze wire in the description of the beads on the IAA card.[4] Hence, I assume that the beads from Tel 'Ira were kept together thanks to corrosion materials and not due to the preservation of any linen thread or bronze wire.

Figure 6. Necklace segment found in Tel 'Ira after Kertesz 1999: Fig. 14.33; no scale was provided. The photo is reproduced here in spite of its low quality, due to its central importance for this article.

It is interesting to note that while one of the glass beads from Tel 'Ira is identical to the gray beads with white band from the museum, the second is a plain light-colored bead, which seems identical to another glass bead from the museum (see beads Group 4 below, Figure 4: 8). This may hint that the two additional glass beads in the museum's trove were also part of the same necklace, but as already mentioned, I decided to refer to them as separate beads, and they are discussed below on their own.

There is little doubt that if indeed the necklace segment from Tel 'Ira is part of the necklace that arrived at the museum in six segments, the museum's necklace was looted from Tomb 13 at Tel 'Ira. The excavators of Tel 'Ira mention in their report that most of the tombs in the cemetery were robbed in recent times (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: 129). They supposed that a school exercise book found in one of the tombs (the number of the tomb is not mentioned) and dated February 1972 may indicate that the cemetery was looted about that time (*ibid.*: 130). If indeed true, this means that it took more than ten years between the cemetery being looted and the entire trove of artifacts being sold to the museum.

After identifying the provenance of the beads of Group 1 as Tomb 13 in Tel 'Ira, it is clear that there are many other clues that point to the origin of the entire museum's trove in the same site.

Beads Group 2

Beads Group 2 is the smallest of the four groups, but one of the most varied (Table 2). It consists of only six beads: four granulated cylinder silver beads, one carnelian bead and one agate bead.

The four granulated cylinder silver beads (Figures 4: 2, 5: 2) are composed of three disks, each made of soldered granules, that were then soldered one upon the other and fused together to create a cylindrical bead (Verduci 2018: 154–155, subtype V5.b.1). Each disk is composed of seven granules, and hence its external diameter is

[4] The photo of this necklace segment published by Kertesz (1999: fig. 14.33) has no scale, but the IAA photo on the object card shows its width to be ca. 2.5 cm; almost exactly the same width as Segment 1 from the museum's trove.

Table 2. The composition of the necklace's segments of Beads Group 2

	Cylindrical granule, silver	Biconical, carnelian	Barrel-shaped, agate	Total
Segment 6	2	1		**3**
Segment 7	1		1	**2**
Separated	1			**1**
Total	**4**	**1**	**1**	**6**

smaller than the composite granule beads of the first group. The central disk of each cylindrical granulated bead is wider than the two disks that flank it, and it is soldered to them on a different plane, achieving a more sophisticated appearance. The average size of each bead is 0.5 cm in height and 0.35 cm in width. Verduci (2018: 154) dated these beads to the early phases of the Iron Age (Iron Age I–IIA), yet beads of this type were also found in a Persian Period context (Ashkenazi *et al.* 2017: fig. 3: f, bead 3), demonstrating the long life-span of these beads.

A single elongated barrel-shaped agate bead is part of this group (cf. Golani 2013: 194–195, beads type II.5); its dimensions are 0.5 cm in height and 0.4 cm in width (Figure 4: 10). Three delicate white veins cross its center, and three others are barely visible, two on one side of the central veins and one on the other. The choice to work the stone in a manner that would produce this specific design has to be deliberate, and some of the glass beads of Groups 1 and 4 undoubtedly correspond to it.

The short truncated biconical carnelian bead, which is part of Group 2, is identical to the carnelian beads of Group 1 (see above, Figure 4: 5).

Two necklace-segments related to Group 2 arrived at the museum; Segment 6 still had a well-preserved, undyed beige linen thread. Like the threads of Segments 1–3, this was a six-ply thread (see above). It can be seen in Figure 1, top left; unfortunately, the thread was not kept after the beads were cleaned (see note 3 above).

Beads Group 3

Beads Group 3 consists of 23 barrel-shaped silver beads (cf. Golani 2013: 188–189, metal bead type I.5); one of them appears in Figure 5: 3 (see also Figure 4: 3). When the trove arrived at the museum, there were seven groups of attached beads (Figure 1). In Figure 1, six groups of beads are represented on the bottom left, and the seventh is composed by the three cylindrical beads on the top right. Each contained several beads that were joined by corrosion products: two groups contained five and four beads each, three groups consisted of three beads each, and additional two groups were made of two beads each. A single barrel-shaped silver bead arrived separately to the museum and was added to Group 3 due to its similar morphology. The grouped beads indicate that all the barrel-shaped silver beads had been strung on one thread, which did not survive, and thus were part of a separate necklace or bracelet. After cleaning, the average dimensions of the barrel-shaped silver beads are 0.5 cm in height and 0.35 cm in width. Barrel-shaped metal beads are frequent from the Middle Bronze Age to the Persian Period (Golani 2013: 188–189, beads type I.5).

Beads Group 4

Beads Group 4 consists of beads of types that did not appear in the former groups and that arrived separately at the museum. Hence, their connection to the other groups of beads is as yet unknown. This group comprises nine beads: seven plain cylindrical silver beads and two glass beads.

The plain cylindrical silver beads (Figure 4: 4) were separated from each other on arrival, but presumably had been part of the same necklace/bracelet. The average dimensions of a bead of this type are 0.35 cm in height and 0.3 cm in width. The life-span of cylindrical metal beads is even longer than that of the barrel-shaped silver beads of Group 3, and they are dated from the Early Bronze Age to the Persian Period (Golani 2013: 193, beads type I.10). The two glass beads are different from each other. The first is a yellowish-light gray glass bead with two white central bands (height: 0.5 cm; width: 0.35 cm; Figure 4: 7). The bands are more delicate than the single central band on the glass beads of Group 1, maybe indicating that they represent two trails, and not cane segments. The second glass bead is a plain, whitish-yellow, almost spherical bead with whitish bright patina (height: 0.45 cm; width: 0.35 cm; Figure 4: 8). It seems identical to the plain glass bead of the necklace segment from Tomb 13 at Tel 'Ira (see above). The pale color of both this bead and all other glass beads in the trove was probably brighter originally, and faded with time.

Earrings

Four almost identical silver earrings are part of the museum's trove (Table 3; Figure 8). All of them are in a perfect state of preservation; one, which is missing one side granule (Figures 7, left; 8:1), arrived at the museum broken and was repaired in the museum's lab. As in the case of the silver beads, the earrings had a thick green corrosion layer when they arrived at the museum (Figure 7), attesting to their copper-rich silver alloy.

Figure 7. Low resolution working photo of three of the earrings on arrival at the museum: on left is 85.5.46, the two others are unidentifiable (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Ruhi Baharad).

Table 3. Measurements and weights of the silver earrings

Figure 8	Reg. No.	Measurements and weights
1	85.5.46	Height: 3.3 cm; width: 1.3 cm; weight: 1.36 gr.
2	85.5.47	Height: 3.3 cm; width: 1.4 cm; weight: 1.71 gr.
3	85.5.48	Height: 3.4 cm; width: 1.3 cm; weight: 1.92 gr.
4	85.5.49	Height: 3.3 cm; width: 1.3 cm; weight: 1.52 gr.

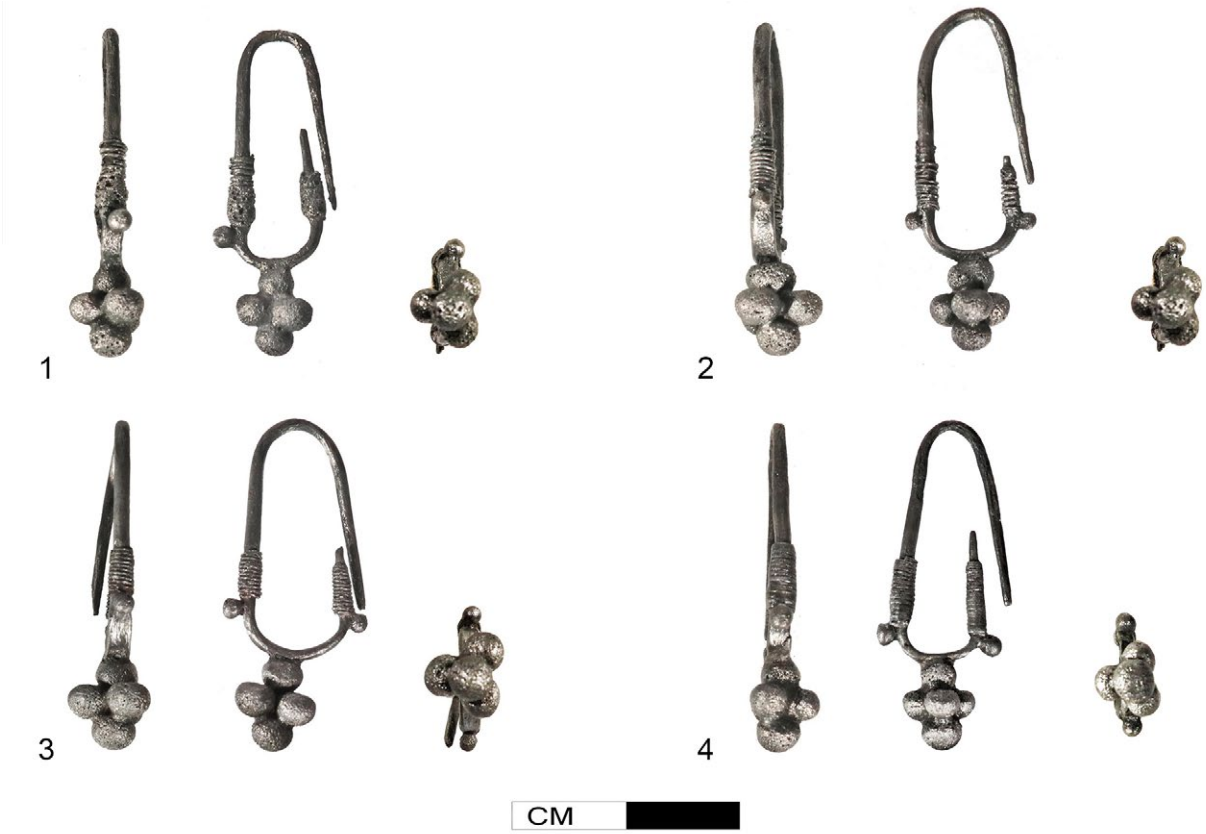

Figure 8. The silver earrings: (1) 85.5.46; (2) 85.5.47; (3) 85.5.48; (4) 85.5.49. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin.

This is further evidence of the connection between the museum's trove and Tel 'Ira, since the composition of the silver jewellery from the cemetery of Tel 'Ira was also rich in copper (Freud 1999b: table 8.2).

The earrings are of the type with an attachment of a solid granule cluster (Golani 2013: 109–111, earring type II.6a; Verduci 2018: 86–88, subtype 1II.b), also known as mulberry type or grape cluster type earrings (Maxwell-Hyslop 1971: 116).

The side-opening hoop of the earrings is elongated, tapering towards the top and more rounded at its bottom. A cluster of five granules was soldered to the bottom of the hoop. It comprises three central granules that were horizontally soldered to each other, and two granules that were soldered to them, one above and one below. The heaviest part of the earrings is the granule cluster, testifying to the granules being solid, not hollow. This is also suggested by the perfect state of preservation of the granules, as opposed to most of

Figure 9. The silver finger-rings: (1) 85.5.43; (2) 85.5.44. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin.

the hollow granules in other earrings, that are found broken (cf. Golani 2013: f 11: 15–17; Freud 1999b: fig. 8.2: 2–6). The hoop is further decorated on its lower part with two wound wires, one on either side, and below each wire, on the lower knees of the hoop, a granule, (smaller than the granules of the lower cluster), was soldered.

Though similar, the earrings differ in their weight (Table 3), the length of the wound wires, the angle in which the granule cluster was soldered to the hoop (e.g., in Figure 8: 3 the cluster slants toward the left), the width of the hoop, and the morphology of the side-opening hoop (which is dictated by the ratio between the upper and lower parts of the hoop, that seems a bit different in each earring). Even so, their striking similarity and the very highly skillful workmanship must testify to their having been made by the same silversmith.

Various types of earrings with an attachment of a solid granule cluster date from the Middle Bronze Age to the Classical Periods (Golani 2013: 109). However, similar earrings to the ones published here are only known in the Late Iron Age and the Persian Period (*ibid.*: 110–111). Moreover, the site that yielded the highest number of earrings of this type – either with solid or hollow granule cluster – is Tel 'Ira (Freud 1999b: 396–397, table 8.1: 1–14). Actually, an identical silver earring with solid granules was found in Tomb 13, where the necklace segment, which is similar to the one in the museum's Bead Group 1, was also found (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: fig. 4.25: 4; Freud 1999b: fig. 8.2: 1). These two pieces of circumstantial evidence strengthen again the inevitable conclusion that the museum's trove was looted from the cemetery of Tel 'Ira.

Finger-rings

A complete finger-ring and an additional fragment of another one, both made of silver, are part of the museum's trove (Table 4).

Table 4. Measurements and weights of the silver rings

Figure 9	Reg. No.	Measurements and weights
1	85.5.43	Diameter: 2.1 cm; width: 0.9 cm; thickness: 0.2 cm; weight: 5.22 gr.
2	85.5.44	Width: 1 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm; weight: 0.83 gr.

The complete finger-ring (Figure 9: 1, reg. no. 85.5.43) is of the closed plain type of rings with a plano-convex section (cf. Verduci 2018: 107, type 2I.a.v). A wide-gap joint testifies to its production from a bent flat band. The best parallel in terms of both morphology and technology comes from the Samaria hoard, dated to the Persian Period (Gitler and Tal 2020: 188: 68, pl. 5: 68). The ring fragment (Figure 9: 2, reg. no. 85.5.44) survived to only some third of the complete ring. One side of it may have been cut already in antiquity. It seems to represent a more delicate ring than the complete specimen. Since it is hammered and its section is flattened and convex, it fits another type of open plain rings with a flattened section (Golani 2013: 132–133, type small rings III.2a; Verduci 2018: 109, type 2I.b.v). Theoretically, due to its preservation state this fragment can also be part of a bezel ring, although this option seems less probable, due to the rarity of bezel rings. Both types have a long chronological span, from the Late Bronze Age to the Persian period, and hence they have only meager implications in the dating of the museum's trove.

Bone pendant

A fragment of a drop-shaped pendant made of a thin bone plaque is part of the museum's trove (Figure 10, reg. no. 85.5.50). The lower part of the plaque is not preserved. It measures 2.4 cm in height, 1.4 cm in width and is 0.2 cm thick. The pendant's suspension tab, which is slightly broken on one side, is mushroom-shaped, with a large hole drilled in its center. The surface of the pendant was decorated on both sides with rows of incised circles, whose centers were drilled out with a ring-and-dot motif. In each row there are three circles, the central one several millimeters higher than the two side-ones. All in all, the remains of nine circles are visible on the body of the pendant, four of them only partially preserved. It is worth noting that in two of these circles – the central one and one in the top row – the remains of two drill-holes can be observed, both are at the center of the circle on one face of the

Figure 10. The bone pendant 85.5.50 (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

pendant, and out of it on the other. This means that at least in these two cases, the center of the circles was drilled from the two faces towards the middle.

The missing part of the pendant was wider than the preserved one, as its widening contour attests. Thus, one may suggest that the lower rows had more than three circles each. This design is rare in parallels of these objects, though some do exist (e.g., Golani, 2013: fig. 25: 6).

Pendants of this type are known almost solely from the southern Levant, and date to the entire Iron Age II (*ibid.*: 174–176). The best three parallels to the museum's pendant were found in tombs in Lachish dated to the Iron Age IIA–IIB (*ibid.*: fig. 25: 6–8). There is still a debate whether all or some of these pendants were used as calendars (*ibid.:* 175).

Cowrie shell

A rather large cowrie shell (3.2 cm high, 6.2 cm wide; Figure 14: 11; reg. no. 85.5.34), is also part of the trove. The shell is pierced on the upper side towards the front in the dorsal anterior extremity. The piercing diameter is 0.3 cm. Presumably it was suspended as an ornament and hence it can be included with the jewellery. Inside the shell a grayish-white material is still visible, undoubtedly the soil of the looted site.

Cowrie shells, originating in the Red Sea, are well-known in the mollusk assemblages of Iron Age strata, and may have been used as shell money, beads or charms (Bar-Yosef Meir 1999: 50–51). Since the underside ventral part of the shell from the museum is well smoothed and due to its large dimensions, it may be suggested that it was used, at least at some point, as an unidentified tool.

The alabaster objects

Three alabaster items are part of the museum's trove: a shallow bowl, a squat jar and a squat jar stopper.

The shallow bowl (Figures 11; 14: 10, reg. no. 85.5.32) has a ledge rim, straight wall and a flat base. Its height is 1.5 cm and its diameter 10 cm. Its rim is chipped in several places, and it had broken in half and glued before it arrived at the museum. It may have broken in antiquity, although the possibility that it was shattered during the looting of the site cannot be ruled out. This type of bowls, also known as ledge-rimmed everted bowls, is known from the Iron Age IIC to the Hellenistic Period, and has many parallels throughout the Levant (Squitieri 2016: 70). Notably, a similar alabaster bowl was found in Tomb 13 at Tel 'Ira's eastern cemetery (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: figs. 4.24: 3; 4.25: 1), the same tomb in which a necklace segment identical to Segments 1–3 from the museum was found (see above).

Figure 11. Shallow alabaster bowl 85.5.32 (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

If they were really found together, the two additional alabaster items — a squat jar and a squat jar stopper — could be considered a set. However, since the diameter of the mouth of the jar is larger than that of the ledge around the base of the stopper, it seems that the two were not manufactured as an item, but may have been connected during their use. In any event, the stone of both is of high quality and thus they should be considered as an import (Squitieri, personal communication).

The squat jar (Figures 12; 14: 9, reg. no. 85.5.33/1) has two broken lug handles, pierced at the center. The better-preserved handle was horizontally pierced again through its upper part probably after the two handles were broken. There is no evidence of such piercing of the other handle, so I assume it is evidence of an attempt to repair the object. The height of the squat jar is 6.2 cm and its width is 7.4 cm; the diameter of its mouth is 3.5 cm. Squitieri (2016: 89–90) dated squat jars from the Persian Period up to the 1st century CE (see recently Persian Period specimens from the Negev Highlands, Pasternak and Erickson-Gini 2023: Fig. 12). However, very important evidence to the type's date is provided by three similar vessels, one of them complete, that were found in Ḥorvat Radum (Freud 2007: figs. 16.6: 1–2; 16.7: 1–3). Since it is a single-stratum site, which dates only to the Iron Age IIC (late 7th–early 6th century BCE), it seems that the dating of the squat jars should start during the very late Iron Age (see also 6th century BCE specimens from Yemen, Hassell 1997: 246). However, whatever their date may be, it is accepted that their presence in the Levant may be used as an indicator of trade routes from Arabia (Squitieri 2016: 152–154).

Figure 12. Squat alabaster jar 85.5.33/1 (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

Figure 13. Squat alabaster jar stopper 85.5.33/2 (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin).

The squat jar stopper (Figures 13; 14: 9, reg. no. 85.5.33/2) is 2.7 cm high, its maximum diameter is 4.3 cm, and the diameter of the ledge around its base is 3.1 cm. The stopper has a pierced handle, slightly chipped on one side. The handle was drilled from both sides, as is evident from the two drill-holes on its chipped side; one of them stopped midway. Several stoppers of this type were found in the Levant (see recently Persian Period specimens from the Negev Highlands, Pasternak and Erickson-Gini 2023: fig. 12); one important specimen that is not mentioned by Squitieri (2016: 89) is from Ḥorvat Radum (Freud 2007: fig. 16.6: 3; 16.7: 4) and it strengthens again an early date for squat jars and their stoppers, already in the Iron Age IIC (see above).

Figure 14. Pottery and alabaster vessels and cowrie shell: (1) Bowl 85.5.35; (2) Jug 85.5.38; (3) Jug 85.5.41; (4) Jug 85.5.42; (5) Jug 85.5.39; (6) Jug 85.5.40; (7) Juglet 85.5.37; (8) Juglet 85.5.36; (9) Squat alabaster jar 85.5.33/1 and its stopper 85.5.33/2; (10) Shallow alabaster bowl 85.5.32; (11) Cowrie shell 85.5.34. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Vladimir Naikhin.

The pottery vessels

The eight pottery vessels that were part of the museum's trove include one bowl, five jugs and two juglets (Figure 14). All of them are intact, except for one jug (Figure 14: 6) that was broken in two, and restored before it arrived at the museum. Each vessel is discussed below and dated according to available parallels; parallels from Tel 'Ira were emphasized.

Carinated bowl (Figure 14: 1, reg. no. 85.5.35) with a simple rim; height: 5.6 cm, diameter: 20.1 cm. Light brown clay; drab reddish-brown slip fully covers the surface inside and over the rim, to above the carination outside; spiral wheel burnishing-marks inside. Two plastic knobs attached to the rim probably represent a degenerate bar handle. The rim contour is asymmetric, deformed before firing. The best parallels are from several tombs in Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004: 31, figs. 2.46: 5; 2.80: 5; 2.82: 6), where they were dated to the late 9th and 8th centuries BCE. The wheel burnishing and other parallels from Tel 'Eton I (Zimhoni 1997: fig. 4.8: 1, 7) and a tomb in Tel Ḥalif (Borowski 1994: fig. 1: 2–3), date our bowl to the Iron Age IIB.

Jug (Figure 14: 3, reg. no. 85.5.41) with rounded body and base, tall wide neck, simple rim, and handle that extends from body to rim; height: 14.2 cm, width: 11.5 cm. The clay is buff to light brown. This jug belongs to one of two main medium-size jug types in Iron Age IIB Judah and the Negev (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2015: 221, fig. 2.4.16: 1–3). Other examples (e.g., from Tel 'Ira VII, Freud 1999a: figs. 6.74: 19; 6.84: 12–13) testify that this type was still in use during the Iron Age IIC.

Elongated jug (Figure 14: 6, reg. no. 85.5.40) with rounded base and a narrow ridged-neck, the rim is gently pinched; height: 19.6 cm, width: 10.8 cm. The clay is greenish-white. This type of jug is not frequent but a good parallel was found in the cemetery of Tel 'Ira, Tomb 15 (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: fig. 4.33: 18), although it is of different ware (brown clay).

Two jugs (Figure 14: 2, reg. no. 85.5.38; Figure 14: 4, reg. no. 85.5.42) with ring base, high neck, folded rim which is gently pinched, and handle extending from body to rim; reg. no. 85.5.38: height: 19.1 cm, width: 15.3 cm; reg. no. 85.5.42: height: 21.4 cm, width: 14.3 cm. The clay of both is greenish-white. This jug type is mainly frequent

in Iron Age IIA–IIB Philistia (Gitin 2015: 265, pl. 2.5.9: 1–3), although a good parallel was unearthed in Tel 'Ira VII–VI (Freud 1999a: fig. 6.68: 16).

Jug (Figure 14: 5, reg. no. 85.5.39) with ring base, ridged neck and handle extending from body to the ridge; height: 19.1 cm, width: 12.5 cm. Reddish-brown clay. It has parallels from the Iron Age IIB in Judah and the Negev (Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2015: pl. 2.4.16: 4). Good parallels were uncovered at Tel 'Ira VII–VI (Freud 1999a: figs. 6.62: 13; 6.74: 17-18); the specimens from Stratum VII are with a flat base. Thus, the jug from the museum should be dated to the Iron Age IIB–IIC.

One of the two globular juglets (Figure 14: 8, reg. no. 85.5.36) has a long, narrow neck, simple rim and button base. Its height is 11.4 cm, and its width considered with the handle is 8 cm. A red slip with horizontal burnishing covers the whole surface, including the base, which is composed by reddish-brown clay. This type is known as 'Black Juglet' due to the characteristic color of most vessels. Amiran (1969: 256) noted that the location of the handle attachment has chronological significance: in the Iron Age IIA, when these juglets first appear, the handle is attached at the center of the neck, while in the Iron Age IIB it is attached to the rim of the vessel. Hence our juglet can confidently be dated to the Iron Age IIA. Many examples were found throughout the southern Levant (Arie 2013: 705–706; Cohen-Weinberger and Panitz-Cohen 2014; Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2015: pl. 2.4.8: 5). A close parallel was unearthed in Tomb 15 at Tel 'Ira (Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: fig. 4.33: 15).

The other globular juglet (Figure 14: 7, reg. no. 85.5.37) has a rounded base and high ridged neck. Small loop handle extends from the body to the ridge on the neck. Its height is 10.1 cm, and its width 5.3 cm. The clay is brown and the entire vessel is red-slipped and vertically burnished. A group of three black horizontal lines appears on both body and neck, and additional black line on the rim. The morphology of the vessel and especially the design of its neck and its excellent burnishing, hints that it is a local imitation of Cypriote "Black on Red " juglets. 'Black on Red' vessels are mostly imported to the southern Levant during the Iron Age IIA, although they continue to appear in smaller quantities during the Iron Age IIB (Schreiber 2003; Arie 2013: 726–729). Hence, this juglet's date may be Iron Age IIA–IIB. No good parallels were located, but see a juglet from Masos II (Fritz and Kempinski 1983: pl. 143: 4).

Discussion

Provenance

As mentioned above, the main evidence for the provenance of the trove of artifacts bought by the Israel Museum in 1985 is the necklace segment found in Tomb 13 in the eastern cemetery of Tel 'Ira, which was identical to Segments 1–3 from the museum. The fact that fragments of the same necklace were uncovered in controlled excavations at Tel 'Ira and in the museum's trove, leaves no doubt regarding the connection between the two assemblages.

However, is it possible to be certain that the entire museum's trove, which is quite varied, was really looted in one site? Or did the robbers, or the antiquities dealer, add artifacts to the original group, to increase its value? It is hard to answer these questions with certainty, yet there seem to be several indications that connect these objects to each other, and moreover, link them all to Tel 'Ira and its cemetery.

First, all the pottery and alabaster vessels are intact, or restored from two large pieces, and all the delicate jewellery was found in a perfect state of preservation. This implies that the entire museum's trove was looted from tombs and not from habitation contexts. Moreover, the preservation of the linen thread of some necklaces segments suggests their provenance is in a dry climate, which the Negev fits perfectly. There is also other circumstantial evidence that testifies to the museum's trove having been indeed looted from one site and that this site was indeed Tel 'Ira: The tombs from Tel 'Ira are dated to the same chronological span of time as the artifacts from the museum (see below); almost all of the pottery vessels from the museum have very good parallels in the cemetery of Tel 'Ira; the majority of the items from the museum are dated to the Iron Age IIC, exactly the same period that the Tel 'Ira settlement and tombs reached their peak; the silver composition of both Tel 'Ira and the museum's jewellery is made of a copper-rich alloy; in both assemblages there is a rather high number of silver granule cluster earrings; and in the two assemblages the same alabaster bowls were found, while the other two very rare alabaster objects from the museum have good parallels from nearby Ḥorvat Radum.

Two pottery vessels, that is one of the juglets and the bowl, do not have parallels in Tel 'Ira. Since the juglet (Figure 14: 7) does not have any other parallel, its connection with Tel 'Ira cannot be ruled out. The bowl (Figure 14: 1) may have been an import from the Judean foothills (Shephela), where parallels to it are found, although it may also be considered, in my opinion, as the only vessel, which is not really part of this assemblage.

Date

Since all the pottery vessels from the museum's trove are of well-documented types, it is clear that they are not dated to one chronological horizon of the Iron Age. Actually, they provide *fossiles directeurs* that are well-dated to the Iron Age IIA (e.g., Figure 14: 8), Iron Age IIB (e.g., Figure 14: 1) and Iron Age IIC (e.g., Figure 14: 2, 4–6).

The date of the alabaster vessels and the jewellery may be the Iron Age IIC, the Babylonian Period, or the Persian Period.

Because it is clear now that the museum's objects originated in Tel 'Ira, a closer look at the dating of the different strata of the site is necessary. The Iron Age strata on the tell were dated to almost the entire range of the Iron Age II (Beit-Arieh 1999: 170–173): Stratum VIII dates to the Late Iron Age IIA and Early Iron Age IIB,[5] and Strata VII–VI date to the Iron Age IIC. The Babylonian Period (6th century BCE) is documented only in Tomb 23 in the cemetery (*ibid*.: 173; Beit-Arieh, Freud and Baron 1999: 162–166), but not on the mound. Stratum V, which dates to the Persian period, is very fragmentary and is not represented in all of the excavated areas, and not at all in the cemetery. It was mainly observed thanks to a small quantity of pottery and other finds (especially, two small Aramaic ostraca ; Beit-Arieh 1999: 173; Freud 1999a: 226, figs. 6.64, 6.107).

Can the jewellery and alabaster vessels from the museum be dated to the Babylonian Period or the Persian Period? Theoretically, due to good parallels to most of their types, the answer to this question can be positive. However, I believe that the assemblage of jewellery and alabaster vessels from the museum fits better Strata VII–VI from the tell (Iron Age IIC), and the probability that they are from the Babylonian or Persian Period is very low. This is based on the meager finds from the excavations that are dated to the Babylonian and the Persian Periods (see above) and their rather mundane nature, as opposed to the magnificent jewellery and imported alabaster vessels from the museum's trove, that testify to the high status of the individuals interred in the cemetery (see more below). Even the Babylonian Period jewellery from Tomb 23 is mostly made of bronze, not silver, as for example six bracelets; and the only silver earring from this tomb is of a completely different type (Freud 1999b: table 8.1: 16–22).

To sum up, it is possible to date the entire museum's trove to the time span from the Iron Age IIA to Iron Age IIC, hence 9th–early 6th centuries BCE. The beginning of this long period is represented by a small number of pottery vessels (Figure 14: 3, 8), while most of the objects, the jewellery, alabaster vessels and at least half of the pottery vessels (Figure 14: 2, 4–6), are from the Iron Age IIC. Remarkably, the date of the museum's trove exactly matches the chronological range of the tombs of the cemetery of Tel 'Ira, yet, unlike Tomb 23 in Tel 'Ira, does not continue into the Babylonian Period.

[5] The terminology used in the report of Tel 'Ira is slightly different, but the pottery assemblages and the absolute chronology presented by the excavators testify that this is what they meant in today's accepted terminology.

Archaeological contribution and its challenges

The jewellery in the museum's trove considerably augments the assemblage from the southern part of the kingdom of Judah during the Iron Age IIC. Moreover, since the silver granule cluster earrings are quite frequent at Tel 'Ira, the additional earrings from the museum may be another clue for their production by a local silversmith.

The museum's trove testifies, as many of the objects from Tel 'Ira tombs do, to the role of the site in the commerce system of the biblical Negev: the silver and glass probably arrived from the Phoenician coast. The silver was brought to Phoenicia from afar by Phoenician traders, in contrast to the glass that was probably produced in Phoenicia itself. The alabaster items originated in Arabia. This is in accord with the historical reconstruction of the Negev during the end of the Iron Age (Beit-Arieh 1999: 177).

In addition, Freud (1999b: 400) argued that the silver jewellery in the tombs may indicate a higher-than-average economic status for their occupants. As the elaborate architecture of these hewn tombs attests, and now also the other objects from the museum's trove, the eastern cemetery of Tel 'Ira was the elite graveyard of the city, while lower status people were probably buried elsewhere and probably in a different way (pit tombs?). It seems that the elite population of Tel 'Ira was well able to afford removing precious artifacts from circulation and burying them with their dead. This probably reflects again their affluent economic status on the one hand, and on the other their belief in the afterlife and the need to facilitate the stay of the deceased in the afterworld with personal equipment.

Identifying the origins of the looted trove as the cemetery of Tel 'Ira is a very rare situation in which an unprovenanced group of objects bought in the antiquities market is transformed, and can now obtain new levels of interpretation. These artifacts currently hold much more varied archaeological information than in the recent past, before their connection with Tel 'Ira was revealed. But, this very unusual change in the objects' status challenges archaeological ethics, due to the very problematic way in which these objects arrived to the museum. Yet, since these artifacts are today in public hands, I believe they indeed deserve publication and public discussion by the archaeological research community, both regarding ethical questions, and their contribution to archaeology.

Future research of soil samples from Tel 'Ira and their comparison with the material trapped in some of the museum's objects, coupled with petrography of the pottery vessels from the museum, may reinforce the

identification of their provenance at Tel 'Ira. Moreover, I hope that in the near future the necklace segment from Tomb 13 at Tel 'Ira will be located in the IAA collections, and then it will be easier to compare it to the museum's jewellery. In addition, metallurgical analysis of the silver items from both the Tel 'Ira's tombs and the museum may validate my conclusions regarding the origin of the museum's trove on the one hand, and locate the origin of the silver, tracing its long way into the Iron Age Negev on the other.

Conclusions

The possibility of tracing the connection between a group of objects from the antiquities market and an archaeological assemblage found in controlled excavations is very rare. But sometimes this connection is feasible, as the case of the Israel Museum's trove proves. This trove represents a coherent archaeological assemblage, which was looted in the early 1970s from the eastern cemetery of Tel 'Ira in the northern Negev. This is best demonstrated by the identical necklace segments found in Tomb 13 at Tel 'Ira and in the museum's trove, but there are several other clues, such as good parallels for almost all the museum's pottery vessels in Tel 'Ira, the high frequency of silver granule cluster earrings in both Tel 'Ira and the museum's trove, and the copper-rich silver alloy in the metal jewellery in the two assemblages.

The artifacts from the museum are dated, like the tombs in the Tel 'Ira cemetery, from the Iron Age IIA to the Iron Age IIC. However, the date for the jewellery, alabastra and most of the pottery can be narrowed down, to the Iron Age IIC. This is the time in which the settlement of Tel 'Ira reached its peak (Strata VII–VI), as part of the southern border of the kingdom of Judah. The analyses of the objects from the Tel 'Ira tombs and the museum's trove testify to the graveyard being the elite cemetery of the site. This high-status social group could afford to give up so many expensive items of exotic and far away source and inter them in the tombs.

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Chapter 2: Articulating foundation myths in Milesian festivals: A diachronic perspective

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Abstract. The polis history of conflict among ethnic groups at Miletus is analyzed diachronically, using literary, archaeological, and inscriptional evidence for sanctuaries in the Milesian chora.

Keywords: Aphrodite, Apollo Delphinios, Artemis Kithone, Athena, Crete, Didyma, *Iliad*, Miletus, Molpoi, Neileids.

Introduction

Tallay Ornan's 2010 article arguing that the appearance of motifs drawn from the Gilgamesh epic in glyptic and monumental art from the Near East could be used to trace the development and spread of an oral tradition was an important inspiration for my own work on the prehistory of Homeric epic. Here I offer a contribution concerning the cultural history of Miletus in the Early Iron Age and Archaic period that builds upon some of the interpretive techniques whose value Tallay has demonstrated in her art-historical studies.

Miletus is an especially informative Mediterranean site for those interested in understanding how Iron-Age inhabitants framed their past, since we have access to an unusually wide range of evidence. First of all, archaeology gives us a glimpse of the facts on the ground that were remembered selectively and in a stylized way to serve political and other agendas, providing evidence of Minoans, then Mycenaeans settling in Miletus, before another influx of immigrants from Greece during the Protogeometric period.[1] The Greek legends, although mostly quite late, show there were indeed memories of an arrival from Crete, while legends of Neileids arriving by way of Athens reflect post-Bronze Age immigration, but refracted through an intra-Greek "ethnic" lens that was interested in firming ties among Ionian Greeks on both sides of the Aegean during the Archaic period.[2] Moreover, Hittite texts show Miletus (called Milawatta) was a place of contention between the Hittites and Mycenaeans,[3] establishing that Miletus' fractious political climate, commemorated in multiple local histories, extended deep into the second millennium BCE. Meanwhile, the local Iron-Age inhabitants, whether labeled Carians, Leleges, or Gergithes, were able to leave traces of their resistance to assimilation in the Greek sources.[4] Inscriptions from Miletus are yet another source of evidence, in particular Milet I.3, 133 (ca. 200 BCE), which provides details of a yearly festival procession from the Delphinion and *prytaneion,* the seat of government at Miletus, to nearby Didyma/Branchidae by a group of elite men called the Molpoi ("singer-dancers"). The procession symbolically connects and subordinates the prestigious "native" oracle[5] to Ionian Miletus, and thus articulates a statement about the role of ethnic identity in the city.

Next, the basic plots of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* if not the exact texts now available to us, were in place by the end of the 8th century. Because they feature Nestor, the ancestor of the Neileids, a Panionic setting for their performance can be inferred, although not necessarily one that linked the Anatolian littoral strictly to Athens.[6] And, as Douglas Frame argues, Miletus was a key Panionic performance venue for the two epics before the festival was moved to the Panionion at nearby Mykale.[7] Thus, the *Iliad* is a precious witness to how ethnic identities were deployed among groups jockeying for position in Miletus at least 100 years before the rise of Didyma to international importance.[8]

[1] On the archaeology of Miletus, see most recently Raymond *et al.* 2016.
[2] On the cultivation of myths of Neileid colonization in the Archaic period, see Hall 1997: 51–53.
[3] *CTH* 61.II: Extensive Annals of Mursili II, §1′; *CTH* 181: Tawagalawa Letter, 4, 5, 12; *CTH* 182: Milawatta Letter, translit. and trans. Beckman, Bryce, and Cline 2011: 28–29, 104–105, 114–115, 123–133.
[4] For Carians, see below; Leleges: Rumscheid 2009; Gergithes: Herda 2013.
[5] So Pausanias 7.2.6; Herodotus (1.157) calls the sanctuary "ancient."
[6] Frame 2009: 105–238 on Nestor and the Neileids in Homeric epic. It is disputed whether *Il.* 13.685–686, 689, where the Ionians are mentioned with Boeotians, Locrians, Phthians, Epeians, and Athenians, is interpolated in whole or in part (so Ulf 1996: 251). On Panionic identity not necessarily grouping Athenians with Anatolian Greeks in earlier periods, see Crielaard 2009: 39.
[7] Frame 2009: 17–18, 515–647. Miletus was the most powerful member of the Ionian Dodecapolis, able to negotiate treaties of alliance, not vassalage, with Alyattes (*r.* 618–561) and Cyrus (ca. 600–530) (Hdt. 1.22.4, 141.4). In the time of Herodotus (1.148), the Panionion was located on Mykale. For other evidence of attention paid to Panionic interests in hexametric poetry, see Polito 2018: 153–154, no. 3, 162.
[8] See below on Didyma's history.

Finally, while Rosalind Thomas (2019: 232–233) has observed that the Neleids' arrival was "enshrined in the landscape of Miletus," the city's mnemotopic landscape was in fact even more complicated. As I will argue, the contributions of various ethnicities were highlighted in the city's sanctuaries of Apollo, Athena, Artemis Kithone, Demeter Eleusinios, and Aphrodite in Oikous.[9] The archaeological data showing when each shrine was most frequented and by whom can be used to support the suggestion of different phases of prominence for the different origin legends recorded or inferable from Greek texts, and their articulation in festival contexts.

I begin by discussing the so-called Molpoi decree, and how legends about Miletus' past have been used by modern scholars to interpret the procession between Miletus and the oracular shrine of Apollo Didymaios. Then, from the well-worn topics of this both informative and mysteriously elliptical inscription and Milesian polis history I turn to a topic that has received less discussion, reconstructing earlier stages of how the conflicted history of the city would have been referenced in other public rituals. By combining archaeological and textual evidence with our current state of knowledge concerning post-Bronze-Age changes among Anatolian peoples, I will show we can distinguish stages in the deployment of ethnic difference when framing the past for present political purposes. In this way we can sharpen our understanding of what self-representations the Molpoi procession was intended to replace or compete against.

The Molpoi procession

The Hellenistic decree Milet I.3, 133 describes the duties of the Molpoi in the month Taureion (March-April). The text has a complex redactional history.[10] Its earliest version is dated by its mention of the annual *aisymnētēs* Charopinos, who also appears for the year 476/5 in the list erected in 313/2 of the *aisymnētai* of Miletus, i.e., those who "regulated the Molpoi (*molpōn ēisymnēsan*)."[11] This was shortly after the city was freed by the Athenians in 479. At this point the city was recovering from utter destruction at the hands of the Persians in 494, in retaliation for the disastrous Ionian revolt of 499, which was instigated by the tyrants Aristagoras, son of Molpagoras, and his uncle Histiaios (r. ca. 518–514). The first re-inscribing with possible revisions is assigned to the year 447/6 through the mention of Philtes as *aisymnētēs*. There is room for debate on whether we should assume a gap in the list of eponymous *aisymnētai* during the period when Miletus was occupied by the Persians. If we do, the list begins with the year 537/6. If not, it begins at 522/1.[12] Either date places the beginning of the list within the range of dates posited for the building or improvement of the processional way between Miletus and Didyma along which the Molpoi would have sung and danced: 550–520 BCE.[13] This period must have seen an important codification of the original regulations.

The reasons for the re-inscribing of the Molpoi decree in the Hellenistic period are not relevant to our discussion, although I register here my disagreement with Anja Slawisch's doubts concerning the decree's Archaic origin.[14] She has pointed out that there is no unequivocal archaeological evidence for a paved processional way in the Archaic or Classical period, but she cannot explain away the fact that the Archaic Cult Complex and its statuary are aligned with the route traced in detail by Alexander Herda and earlier scholars (Greaves 2010: 112–113; Herda 2006: 279–285; Slawisch and Wilkinson 2018: 105–106, 110–111, 132, 137–139; Schneider 1987; Tuchelt *et al.* 1996). Moreover, this was the period in which processional ways came into vogue, most notably at nearby Samos with the concomitant re-orienting of Hera's sanctuary away from visitors arriving by ship and towards the nearby town inland. Similarly, the road between Eleusis and Athens was monumentalized by the Peisistratids in the same period.[15]

The Molpoi inscription covers two main topics: the rites during the installation of a new *aisymnētēs*, in which representatives of the city's six tribes participate, and the procedures for "whenever the *stephanēphoroi* ('wreath-bearers') go to Didyma" (18–19), with a portion of the text devoted to laying out at whose sanctuaries and statues the Molpoi will stop to libate and sing paeans along the route to Didyma: first the city goddess Hecate at the gates of the city, then Dynamis ("power"), the sanctuary of the nymphs, Hermes at the river Kelados ("resounding"), Phylios ("of the tribes") near (Apollo?) Keraiites ("the horned one"), and finally the

[9] Also see Herda 2006: 448, on the mnemotopic nature of Miletus' landscape.

[10] On the Molpoi decree and the route of the Molpoi procession see the detailed discussion of Herda 2006, and the briefer English synopsis and translation in Herda 2011, with the comments of Chaniotis 2010, Parker 2008, and Walser 2019, and the edition with translation of Carbon 2017 ff. See Herda 2006: 15–20, 425–427, for earlier discussions of the dating of the text and its parts.

[11] Milet I.3, 122. On the revised dating of the list used here, see Rhodes 2006.

[12] See Gorman 2001: 113–114. Herda 2016: 37–39, presents the most recent argument for assuming a gap.

[13] Tuchelt 1992: 38–39. Herda 2006: 179, argues that this was an era of improvement rather than building for the first time, because in his view the sanctuary had been bound to Miletus since the 7th century (Herda 2006: 175, 447). See below for further discussion.

[14] Slawisch 2009 and 2013: 59; Slawisch and Wilkinson 2018: 108–112, suggest that the Molpoi decree inserts names from the list of annual *aisymnētai* to create a fake archaizing document asserting cult continuity from before the destruction of Miletus by the Persians. But, see the comments of Herda 2019a: 12–13, no. 26.

[15] Sacred ways: Mohr 2013. Sacred way binding Athens to Eleusis in the 8th century: Sourvinou-Inwood 1997 and 2003: 41–44; monumentalized in the time of Peisistratus: Cosmopoulos 2015: 136, 142; Mohr 2013: 65–70.

statues of Chares, a set of Archaic statues representing various prestigious humans placed near the entrance of the Didyma sanctuary, apparently salvaged after the Persian sack of the city (Slawisch and Wilkinson 2018: 121–127). As I have shown elsewhere, the Molpoi were asserting control over both the procession and the shrine that symbolized the contributions of the indigenous inhabitants to the polis, while paying respect to their culture in various ways, such as the homage to Hecate, the use of an "ancient" heirloom cup, the manipulation of the stone *gylloi*, and the stop at the Nymph shrine on the hill between Miletus and Didyma, which replicates Late Bronze Age Anatolian cult journey to a mountain shrine with a spring. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the trump card Anatolians had learned to wield in the face of ascendant Greek identity: expertise in pleasing the gods of the land with indigenous rituals (Bachvarova 2022a).

The inscription also includes details about the duties, contributions, and portions of the priests, the *basileus* ("king"), the herald, the singer, and the *genos* of Onitadai (butchers who deal with the meat offered during the festivities). Additionally, the inscription records incidental information about the performances of the Molpoi in other rites, specifically that they perform paeans during wine-drinking ceremonies in other polis festivals in honor of Apollo.[16] For these performances the city provides sacrificial animals, thus demonstrating public appreciation of the Molpoi's contributions, which also include supplying the abundant wine served at their musical performances.

There is scholarly controversy concerning the section of the inscription about installing the new *aisymnētēs.* Another issue is the temporal relationship between the installation of the new *aisymnētēs* and the procession.[17] I will avoid tackling such problems here. It seems reasonable to assume, however, that the procession occurs during the festival for Apollo Delphinios mentioned in a Late Archaic festival calendar inscribed in the Delphinion (Milet I.3, 31.12–13; Herda 2006: 247–249; 2011: 60). For our purposes we need only note the conceptual connection between Apollo's festival and the induction of the next *aisymnētēs*, which supports the surmise that the Molpoi's festival performances were deeply political as well as religious. Certainly, the care with which the participation of the outgoing and incoming *aisymnētai* and their share of the emoluments from the ritual are specified indicates that the yearly transfer of political power was a fraught one.[18] Indeed, Aristotle termed *aisymnēteia* "elective tyranny," and it has been speculated that the ruthless Milesian tyrant Thrasyboulos (*r.* late 7th–early 6th centuries) rose to power by means of such an office.[19] The original scope of the duties of the Greek social role *aisymnētēs* remains in question, but it may have been related to festivals, since the earliest mention of the term, which comes from *Odyssey* 8.258–260, refers to men who regulated the athletic competitions on Scheria (Gorman 2001: 97).

This background shows how important participation in festivals was at Miletus for exercising citizenship among elites. And, Miletus is far from the only city for which this was the case, although democratic Athens is the city that has preserved the most information on how feasting and cult observances by associations of elites, including – but not limited to – *phyloi* ("tribes"), *gene* ("clans"), or *orgeōnes* ("cult associations"), articulated participation in the community of citizens (Schmitt Pantel 1992; Ismard 2010 and 2018). Just as at Athens various polis units, festivals, and cult observances were (re-)oriented to support its political structure, we should expect that at Miletus intra-polis affiliations and cult organizations such as the Molpoi developed in conformance with oligarchy, a form of participatory government carried out by an exclusive minority of men vying among themselves for prestige.[20] The Molpoi were definitely in existence before the mid 7th century since the civic group also played a role in the cult of

[16] The activity is called *molpon*, rather than the usual term *molpē*. Note that Herda 2006: 78–79; 2011: 63, argues that the *molpon* was a place in the *prytaneion*, but his derivation from *molpeion* requires some linguistic sleight of hand (Chaniotis 2010: 5). In any case, it is not necessary to resolve this problem for my argument.

[17] Herda 2006, esp. pp. 247–249, argues that they are tightly linked and represent different stages of a New Year's festival.

[18] The new *aisymnētēs* receives a share of the victims sacrificed on 9 Taureon, the second day of the ritual, while the outgoing *aisymnētēs* carries out the ritual of sacrifice to Hestia, thus honoring the communal hearth of Miletus at the *prytaneion*, and himself pours the libation and sings the paean, while on 10 Taureon he gives and receives shares of the offerings (8–18).

[19] Thrasyboulos as tyrant: Hdt. 1.20–22, 5.92. In *Politeia* 1285a30–34, Aristotle's example of an *aisymnētēs* is Pittacus of Mytilene. At 1310b25–30, he refers to unnamed men "around Ionia" gaining tyranny through unspecified "honors." According to Aristotle it was the office of *prytanis* which was a stepping-stone to tyranny at Miletus (*Pol.* 1305a15–18); see Kõiv 2016: 40–41. The office of *prytanis* is attested at Miletus in a late 7th–early 6th-cent. inscription (Milet I.3, 129, Gorman 2001: 99–100). The relationship between the *prytaneia* and the *aisymnēteia* is disputed, see Herda 2006: 18–19, n. 64, but the start of the earliest of the *aisymnetēs* lists could mark the beginning of the *aisymnētēs* serving as annual eponym. On the other hand, the fact that the *aisymnētēs* of the Molpoi is attested at Olbia would suggest that the role predated the colony's foundation in the mid 7th cent., although we should not exclude the possibility that political innovations could arrive later (Ehrhardt 1983: 192–203). Gorman (2001: 94–101) and Robertson (1987: 357–359) disagree with the consensus that the *aisymnētēs* of the Molpoi was an important political position. It requires the evidence provided by Aristotle to be discounted. Another question is the relationship between the *stephanēphoroi* and the *aisymnētai*. By the Hellenistic period *aisymnētai* were also *stephanēphoroi*, but Graf, 1974: 211–213; 1979: 7 argues against the assumption that the equivalence should be pushed back to the Archaic period, a position with which Herda 2006: 58–65, 428–429, does not agree.

[20] At Miletus during the relevant period the city was an oligarchy, although it also underwent some periods of tyranny. For the ruling structure of Miletus in the Archaic and Classical periods, see Gorman 2001: 88–90, 219–236. It was an oligarchy in the times of the original inscribing and re-inscribing of Milet I.3, 133 (Herda 2011: 63).

Apollo Delphinios in the colonies of Sinope and Olbia.[21] And, given the programmatic performance of the paean – *molpē* – during the day-long festivities meant to soothe the angry Apollo at *Iliad* 1.472–474, it is possible that the citizen group existed in some form already in the 8th century.

Some have suggested that the Molpoi procession was founded as part of efforts to address through cult the political tensions in 6th-century Miletus recounted in the polis histories,[22] in which case we might connect it to the start of the list of the annual *aisymnētai* (Robertson 1987: 376–377; Guth 2017: 15–16). Others have argued that the procession in which the Molpoi performed can be pushed back into the Middle Iron Age, like the elite organization itself. Indeed, the *Odyssey* (20.276–278) depicts such an event in a festival for Apollo (Robertson 1987: 369; Herda 2006: 19, 174–178, 253, 425, 447–453). However, Didyma might not have been subordinated to Miletus until the mid 6th century, when the monumental dipteros temple for Apollo, too expensive for the sanctuary alone to fund, was begun. Still, nearby Assessos was already under Milesian control before the end of the 7th century, so it is not impossible that Didyma was too,[23] and any time after the synoecism, syncretism of the Milesian and Didymaean Apollos could be used for political ends. One could reframe the question and ask when it would have been considered advantageous to do so, which would have become more likely with the increasing fame of Didymaean Apollo's oracle. This we cannot place earlier than the beginning of the 7th century, because in the Delian section of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, dated unfortunately quite roughly to between the 7th and early 6th centuries, the Chian singer, who has a thorough knowledge of this part of the world, when listing the famous sanctuaries of Apollo mentions Mykale and Miletus but not Didyma.[24] By the end of the 7th century Didyma was a sanctuary of international renown, if we are to believe Herodotus' stories about the pharaoh Necho's (r. ca. 610–ca. 595 BCE) dedication and Croesus's (*r.* 560–546 BCE) consultations.[25] So, we are left with a date range of not before the beginning of the 7th century, but possibly before its end, as the terminus post quem for the procession's founding.

It is true that one story about conflicts in the distant past weathered by the Milesians, which is transmitted by Nicolaus of Damascus (64–4 BCE, *De insidiis* = *FGrH* 90 FF 52–53), seems to allude to the procession. It describes a quarrel among the Neileids in which king Laodamas is killed while leading a hecatomb for Apollo during his festival. But, rather than assuming such legends reflect Early Iron Age reality in a time before Miletus' oligarchy, I have argued instead that they "rebuked the deployment of Neileid identity in the city's politics by arguing that strife among those oligarchs using it was damaging to the polis" (Bachvarova 2022a: 59). Notably, in Nicolaus' story the oracle appears to take the side of indigenous Anatolians by suggesting that the Phrygian Cabeiroi can aid the Milesians after Laodamas' followers take refuge in the nearby town of Assessos (Bachvarova 2022a: 60–61).

Urban sanctuaries and Milesian historiography

Here we reach the limit of the possibilities of interpreting the Molpoi procession in isolation. But, evidence from shrines to other gods in Miletus suggests that at its inception the Molpoi procession would have been one among several ways that intra-Milesian identities would have been presented for public consumption, and putting the procession in this larger context will allow us to push our understanding further. We turn now to the archaeological evidence from Homer's era through the Persian destruction, connecting it to other elements or versions of Miletus' history besides the episode of Neileid conflict preserved by Nicolaus.

In the 8th century, while the *Iliad* was being showcased on the Milesian stage, paved circles, generally thought to be installations for sacrifice and cooking during worship of Greek fictional ancestors (heroes), were set up in two separate sanctuaries.[26] This hints at the possibility of competing clan groups with competing legendary histories that legitimized their bid for participation in government, and it is even possible to surmise that one was Greek-identified, the other indigenous, as I have suggested for some of the many stone circles pressed up against the Bronze Age fortifications of Troy, which

[21] Graf 1974; Herda 2006: 19. *Hoi molpoi* are also attested in the Imperial period at Aigiale on Amorgos (IG 12.7 418), see Cazemier 2019.

[22] See Gorman 2001: 87–128; Guth 2017; Thomas 2019: 227–260; the passages are collected in Thomas 2019: 410–414.

[23] Held 2000: 181–182, and Mohr 2013: 87–89, argue for the mid 6th century. Herda 2006: 175, 447, thinks Didyma was bound to Miletus from an early date. Assessos and its Athena sanctuary under the aegis of Miletus: Hdt. 1.19–22; Gorman 2001: 45.

[24] *HHAp.* 30–49; McInerney 2015: 105–108. The date of performance of the hymn we have, made up of three originally separate sections to Delian, Pythian, and Crisan Apollo, is reasonably secure, since it has been plausibly argued to have been created to celebrate a combined festival for Delian and Pythian Apollo in 523/2 carried out under the sponsorship of the Samian tyrant Polycrates. More difficult is the dating of the separate sections, which are typically placed within a range between the 7th century and the earlier part of the 6th century (Richardson 2010: 13–17).

[25] Hdt. 2.159, 1.46. On the Near Eastern, Cypriot, and Egyptian offerings starting towards the end of the 8th cent., see Bumke 2008. These could have been dedicated by local men who were sailors and mercenaries or by travelers from these countries.

[26] For stone circles connected to remembrance of ancestors see most recently Aslan 2019: 117–122, 266–267. Aslan 2019: 259, 262, compares the stone circles at the Athena temple to the treatment of the Bronze Age ruins and stone circles at Troy. On the relationship between the Bronze Age wall and the Iron Age constructions, see Held 2000: 6–12, 17, 27–29, 179–180. A stone circle is also found at Ionian Clazomenai. For the phenomenon, see Mazarakis Ainian 1997: 122–123. For Miletus, see Hägg 1983.

could have been used by groups who identified with the Trojan side in the legendary conflict.[27]

At Miletus, one paved stone circle was installed within the sanctuary of Athena near the Theater Harbor, an area settled since the Chalcolithic Period.[28] The circle, which dates from the Late Geometric Period (ca. 750 BCE), was associated with the Bronze Age fortification wall beneath it, thus following the typology of such circles, which seem to accommodate rites commemorating a legendary past represented by ruins of earlier structures. A small square building was erected around it in the Early Archaic period, restricting access. A monumental temple is first attested in the Archaic period, directly adjacent to the so-called Kultmal structure encasing the stone circle, built ca. 575 BCE. During this period, there is evidence for banqueting, suggesting the kind of exclusive cult association that the Molpoi represented. The temple received costly offerings from a clientele with contacts throughout the east Mediterranean, indicating the shrine's importance in the polis and perhaps regionally. Like the other two polis sanctuaries I will discuss, the temple was destroyed in the Persian sack of 494 BCE and not rebuilt,[29] but the Athena sanctuary at Assessos remained available to worshippers.

Recent analyses have shown that in Anatolia the polis-protecting goddess Athena was typically syncretized with an indigenous goddess Maliya, including at Phaselis (5th century BCE), Pergamon (4th century), and Lycian Rhodiapolis (Bachvarova 2022b: 107; Rutherford 2020, with earlier refs.). Indeed, in the *Iliad* Athena, like Apollo and Zeus, is presented as having a programmatically divided loyalty. The polis goddess of Troy but a firm ally of the Achaeans, in the end Athena dramatically rejects the pleas of the Trojans before her statue, thus sealing their city's doom (6.310, Bachvarova 2022b: 116–118). Therefore, we are permitted to suspect that the legendary history recalled at Athena's shrine in Miletus was linked to a cultural layer conceived of as pre-Neileid.

I continue this speculation by suggesting that the Athena sanctuary was originally controlled by Glaucids; these would have been the exclusive group of diners who left traces of their festivities. For, the *Iliad* appears to pander to audience members with allegiances to the heroes Sarpedon and Glaucus, both of whom were among those later known as legendary founders of Miletus. Sarpedon was actually deployed by more than one group in the creation of Miletus' legendary past; while one version gave him a "Lycian" Glaucid heritage, another claimed he came from Crete fleeing Minos and thus belonged to the time before the Trojan War. Complicating both claims is the Carian form of his name.[30] A third group of legends insisted instead that the Cretan founder was the eponymous Milatos.[31] Homer certainly knew of the Cretan city Miletus, mentioning it in the Catalog of Ships (*Il.* 2.644). But, the *Iliad* suppresses the Cretan claims of some Milesians, in contrast highlighting the indigenous ethnicity of the *barbarophonos* ("foreign-speaking") residents of the Miletus and its environs in the catalogue of Trojan allies, the only time it is mentioned, where Homer speaks of its foolish and effeminate leader Nastes (*Il.* 2.867–875). Therefore, the *Iliad* seems to be denying Sarpedon's Cretan ancestry, placing him in the wrong generation in order to allow the well-loved hero, in the *Iliad* coming all the way from Lycia by the river Xanthos, to participate in the Trojan War.[32] So, we are in the legendary time not only before the arrival of the Neileids to Miletus, but also before the Lycian Glaucids' arrival, in a parallel universe without Cretans at Miletus, despite the fact that archaeology confirms this was a genuine memory about Bronze-Age Milawatta. The suppressing of the Cretan contribution to Miletus fits with the Panionic performance context of the Homeric epic, which would have discouraged honoring Dorian Cretans. This in turn leads to the surmise that there were tensions between the Cretan- and Ionian -identified groups in 8th-century Miletus.

Our picture of the cultural context of 8th-century Miletus is both sharpened and made more complex by the current understanding of changes in indigenous ethnic identities and population movements after the Bronze Age. First of all, based on the use of the term Lukka in Hittite, the Classical Greek toponym

[27] In Bachvarova 2016a: 55, I suggested that Trojan-identified people performed city laments for Troy directed at the Bronze Age ruins where the stone circles were located, which have left traces on the Homeric *Iliad*. Also see Bachvarova 2016b: 328–329, 435–437.

[28] It has been argued that the Athena sanctuary was a space for cult already in the Middle Bronze Age, during the Minoizing phase at Miletus, and continued to be used as such across the end of the Bronze Age (Greaves 2010: 42–45; Niemeier 2007: 11–12; Raymond *et al.* 2016: 59–60, 69). See Held 2000: 5, 179, discussing skeptically the claims it was a cult site before the Iron Age.

[29] Held 2000: 13–64, 177–183, who further argues that the lack of votive offerings from the mid 6th cent. onwards shows the Athena sanctuary lost its importance with the rise of Didyma. On the history of the site, also see Gorman 2001: 20–22, 24, 199–202. On the fate of the various sanctuaries, see Herda 2019b: 97–102.

[30] On the Carian form of Sarpedon's name, see Durnford 2008; Schürr 2013; Yakubovich 2010: 138–139.

[31] Hesiod *Catalog of Women* F 90.16–32 Most: Sarpedon came from Crete to Lycia. Herodorus, *FGrH* 31 F 45 (late 5th cent.) = Σ *ad* Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.185: Sarpedon came from Crete to Miletus. Also note the version of Ephorus of Cyme (400–330 BCE), *FGrH* 70 F 127 = Str. 14.1.6, in which Sarpedon led Cretans to Miletus, expelling the Leleges; Neileos came after. Apollodorus 3.1.1–2: Sarpedon came from Crete to Lycia, Milatos went from Crete to Miletus via Samos. See discussion of Carless Unwin 2017: 66–73. Hdt. 1.147: Glaucids were Lycians accepted as leaders by the Ionians. Hellenistic coinage shows that Miletus and Erythrai, both Ionian cities, had Glaucid pretensions (Carlier 1984: 432–433).

[32] On Miletus and Sarpedon in the *Iliad*, see Bachvarova 2015: 166–170; 2016b: 422–423, 439–444. Smoot (2019) provides an idiosyncratic and very different interpretation of the Glaucids and the Carians in the *Iliad*.

Lycia seems to have undergone a restriction from its original scope, which would have covered a much larger territory in southwestern Anatolia than Classical Lycia. This helps to explain a notorious crux in the *Iliad*'s list of Trojan allies, which mentions two Lycias, one in Trojan Zeleia and one in the Lycia known in later periods.[33] Thus, the term was likely a Bronze-Age endonym at Miletus. On the other hand, it is plausible that the Carians arrived in Miletus after the Bronze Age, migrating from a more inland home called Karkisa or Karkiya by the Hittites.[34] Therefore, "Lycians" in the term's broader sense were actually the older indigenous group in the area. In the *Iliad* Apollo's divided loyalty is programmatic from its opening lines and therefore refracts the god's multi-cultural identity in Miletus, one which went back centuries. But, in the *Iliad* he is not Carian, instead he is Troadic and Lycian (Bachvarova 2016b: 449–453 and 2022b: 113–116). So, it is possible that originally the Lycian Glaucids conceived of themselves as an indigenous group competing for political standing with the Carians, in the same way that there were two competing groups of Greek-identified colonists. In contrast, the Leleges or Gergithes seem to be alternatives to or subgroups of the Carians rather than their competitors.[35] While the Glaucids would have presented themselves as indigenous, with links extending beyond the Milesian *chora,* it seems they were friendlier to the Greeks than the Carians, as evinced by the secure place and sympathetic characterization Sarpedon and Glaucus are given in Homer's *Iliad*. In contrast, Herodotus (1.146) records that enmity of the Carian women taken as wives by the Neileids was kept alive into his time (Paus. 7.2.5–6. Herda 2009: 36, 58; Herda and Sauter 2009: 67–69). In fact, given the ultimately Greek origin provided to the Lycian hero Bellerophon in *Iliad* 6.155–203, I suggest that the Lycian-ness of the Milesian Glaucids actually represented the self-identification of people who considered themselves the descendants of Mycenaean settlers, otherwise lost from memory in Milesian polis history, or more accurately, it is the leftover of Bronze-Age social categories contrasting (those who considered themselves to be) descendants of Minoan settlers and a mixed indigenous-Mycenean group.[36]

Meanwhile, at Kalabaktepe, the Archaic city's acropolis, which dates back to the Geometric period, a circular stone platform was installed ca. 700 BCE over the ruins of an oval Late Geometric building. Nearby on Kalabaktepe's East Terrace, there was a sanctuary of Artemis Kithone, as confirmed by a dedicatory inscription that dates to ca. 525–500 BCE (SEG 38, 1213 = Milet VI.3 1239; Herda 1998: 28, with n. 204). Pottery from the 8th or early 7th century has been found here, while the temple itself dates to the Late Archaic Period. Although it was destroyed by the Persians at the end of the 5th century, a new sanctuary of Artemis must have been located elsewhere in the city, as evinced by continued mention of Artemis Kithone in Late Classical and Late Hellenistic inscriptions.[37] According to the erudite Hellenistic poet and librarian Callimachus (*Hymn to Artemis* 225–227), Artemis Kithone led Neileos to Miletus from Athens, a myth that would have been articulated in the Neileis festival, which we may presume was celebrated here. Herda suggests this occurred as early as the 8th century;[38] while this cannot be proved by the evidence so far available, Artemis is certainly firmly on the Achaean side in the *Iliad*, and at Miletus her cult does appear to have been used to articulate a Panionic identity. A fair number of Attic imports from the late 6th to early 5th centuries were found in the pottery assemblage, which speaks to ties with Athens (Kerschner 1999: 33), and Hellenistic writers tell legends in which women and girls came from Ionian cities such as Myus and Samos to participate in the Neileis festival, possibly dedicating clothing (*khitones*), a key aspect of her cult.[39] If this shrine was in operation in the Late Geometric period as a sanctuary of Artemis Kithone, the Milesian-influenced *Iliad* suggests a shared yet contested Greco-Anatolian past articulated by different groups' participation in festivals centered at the respective shrines of Athena and Artemis.

As for the location where a history of Cretan foundation would have been celebrated, the important extra-urban sanctuary of Aphrodite "in Oikous" (her local cult epithet) at Zeytintepe, a promontory near the seashore, the establishment of which dates to the beginning of the 7th century, was considered to have been founded

[33] *Il.* 2.824–827, 4.101–103, 119–121; Bachvarova 2016b: 441–443; 2022b: 114–115. Bryce 2006: 148–149, argues that the two applications of the same term are instead evidence of an eastward migration from the Troad to Lycia, a hypothesis of Strabo as well (12.8.4). Migration westward: Yakubovich 2010: 135–136. Restriction in the scope of the name Lukka: Bachvarova 2015: 151–152; 2016b: 443; Bryce 2006: 149.

[34] It is clear that Karkiya/Karkisa lay further northwest than Caria. It is also clear that the relationship between the Bronze and Iron Age terms cannot be via direct transfer into Greek from one of the terms appearing in Hittite. One solution is to deny any connection between them: Oreshko 2019; Simon 2015 and 2016. Another is to postulate a post-Bronze Age migration: Bachvarova, 2015: 151–154; Bryce, 2006: 149. Note that Oreshko's suggestion that the Bronze Age term lies behind the Greek term Gergithes (on which see Herda 2013) does not stand in the way of the migration accepted by others who wish to connect Karkiya/Karkisa to Caria, since the Gergithes are attested at Miletus.

[35] Leleges: Rumscheid 2009; Gergithes: see previous note. Deployment of the two identities: McInerney 2014.

[36] Cf. Bachvarova 2015: 168–169.

[37] For a description of the sanctuary and its history see Kerschner 1999. On later evidence for Artemis at Miletus see Herda 1998: 40 and 2019b: 102–103. Artemis too could have been syncretized with an indigenous deity: Bachvarova 2022a: 71; Herda 2009: 75.

[38] Herda 1998: 35. Robertson 1988: 233–234, discusses the evidence in some detail, but arguing that the relevant festival was the Thargelia.

[39] Plutarch *Moralia* 253F–254A = *Mulierum virtutes* 14; Apollonius of Rhodes FF 7–9 Powell = Athenaeus 353D–F. For the goddess, see Herda 1998; on her cult also see Polito 2018: 161–163. The chiton had a disputed regional connotation, as shown by Herodotus' assertion (5.88) that it is Carian, not Ionian.

(*oikeō*) by Milatos by later erudite writers.[40] The Aphrodite worshipped here was a protective goddess of sailors who also received cult in Milesian colonies (Greaves 2004), and we can infer that the sanctuary had a well-traveled clientele based on its offerings (Greaves 2002: 84; Senff 2003; 2006: 169–170). On the other hand, Callimachus in his *Branchos* gives responsibility for the Cretan foundation to Apollo Delphinios, who arrived at Oikous by way of Delos, ending his voyage at Didyma/Branchidae. He thus asserts the oracle is not indigenous. Callimachus, who is basing his version on the 4th-century Milesian historian Maiandrios, develops a founding story for Miletus like that described in the third section of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (502–544), with the first arrival of the god mapped onto the arrival of the colonizers, for in the Homeric hymn Cretan sailors brought by the god disembark on the beach at Crisa, erect an altar to Apollo Delphinios, and sacrifice to him, as if they themselves are colonizers. They then move in a festive musical procession led by the kithara-playing Apollo himself to the oracular shrine at Delphi. As has been observed by Herda and Christopher Faraone, this parallels the Molpoi procession.[41]

But, while Maiandrios was likely using as his inspiration the version of the Molpoi procession known in his day, we should note that if we place the colonists' landing on the beach at the Lion Harbor where the Delphinion was built in the 6th century (Herda 2005: 250, 253), it would be replacing the locations commemorating the foundation by Cretan Milatos and a different articulation of the Neileid foundation myth, for according to Herodotus' testimony the memorial to Neileos' landing was outside of Miletus at the temple of Demeter Eleusinia on Mykale, built by his companion Philistios to commemorate their original beachhead fortification. It is plausible that the temple was operational in the earlier part of the 6th century because Herodotus mentions Demeter's Thesmophoria being celebrated by the women of Ephesus at an equivalent location on the shore outside of town when describing an attack that occurred in 579 BCE.[42] Moreover, while Apollo Delphinios sanctified colonizing expeditions leaving from Greece, it was Didymaean Apollo who gave the oracles concerning Milesian colonies (Greaves 2007: 18–19; Herda 2008). So, when Delphinios received worship as the colonizers' representative in the Black Sea colonies of Miletus, it may have been as a god of citizenship and sailors more generally rather than as colonizer.[43]

On the other hand, starting in the 6th century the Delphinion could have served as a venue for a joint celebration of a festival by the two sets of the Greek colonists with competing foundation stories, the Neileid-identified and the Cretan-identified groups, which had originally been celebrated separately. The river Kelados, where one stop of the procession was located, was – at least later – claimed to be the son of Cretan Milatos.[44] If this were true for the Archaic period, the stop of the Molpoi procession at Hermes' shrine near Kelados would underline the claim to a Cretan heritage, but it is not impossible that the process was the inverse: the stop at Kelados was made to support the claim of a Cretan heritage of some sub-group of men eligible to serve as Molpoi by adding the biographical detail to the landscape feature. The change of location to the Delphinion may have occurred after the decision not to rebuild the Aphrodite sanctuary destroyed by the Persians and/or could have been inspired by the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, more specifically a version which contained both the Pythian and Crisan sections, since the section concerning the foundation of the seaside shrine for Crisan Apollo was likely added to the hymn to Pythian Apollo at the start of the 6th century, after the First Sacred War between the Delphic Amphictyony and Cirrha, a harbor near Crisa (Faraone 2018: 32–33). This military event thus created the conditions for a melding of Ionian and Cretan hypostases of Apollo at Delphi in the combined Homeric hymns, which would have been felicitous also for Milesians attempting to reconcile factions in the 6th century. That this was successful at Miletus is suggested by the fact that the legends about stasis in the Archaic city we have mentioned do not refer at all to conflict between Cretan-identified and Ionian-identified citizens.

Conclusion

I present now my conclusions concerning change over time in the use of ethnicity during festivals in the construction of Miletus' past. In the 8th century, when the *Iliad* was being performed at Miletus as part of a festival celebrating Ionic identity, two important intra-urban sanctuaries housed competing groups celebrating ancestors with hero cult. One belonged to an "indigenous" polis goddess (equated with Athena), the other to a goddess – at least in later periods –

[40] Oikous founded by Milatos: Theocritus (3rd cent. BCE) 7.115–116, 28.4; Nikainetos of Samos (3rd cent. BCE), quoted by Parthenios *Erotica Pathemata* 11 = *Collectanea Alexandrina* F 1.1 Powell (see Huxley 1970); Σ *ad* Dionysius Periegetes 825 (2nd cent. CE). Zeytintepe the location of Aphrodite's sanctuary: von Graeve 2013.

[41] Call. *Branchos* F 229.12 (ed. Pfeiffer 1965), with *Diegesis* 10.14–17. Line 12 is unfortunately lacunose. Pfeiffer: Οἰκούς]ιον εἰς ἄ[ς]τυ, following the phrasing of Nikainetos. Lobel: Μιλής]ιον (see Pfeiffer's apparatus criticus). Discussion: Fontenrose 1988: 107; Herda 2006: 274; Polito 2009: 86–102. The second-mentioned episode is not preserved but Didyma appears in the opening line, see Herda 2011: 81. Apollo as colonizer in the Homeric hymn: Faraone 2018: 31–32, with earlier refs.; Herda 2005: 289; 2008: 17, 51–61; McInerney 2015: 115.

[42] Hdt. 9.97, 6.26. See discussion of Bowden 2007: 71–72, 75. It is to be distinguished from the later temple at Humeitepe, at which Parthenios (*Erot. Path.* 8) sets a similar tale of invading Gauls interrupting the Thesmophoria.

[43] On Apollo Delphinios as a god denoting incorporation into the citizen body: Gorman 2001: 168–171; Graf 2009: 103–129; Herda 2006: 91–96; sailors: Bachvarova, 2022a: 58; Herda 2005: 287.

[44] Σ *ad* Dionysius Periegetes 825 (*fl.* ca. 125 CE) (ed. Bernhardy 1828: 360); Herda 2006: 305–310.

thought to have supported the colonists from mainland Greece (Artemis Kithone). On other hand, the two-way opposition in the *Iliad* pits *barbarophonoi* against Achaeans, with the Cretan colonists denied a place in Homeric history and Lycian Glaucids given a privileged place as allies of the Trojans, but no home in Miletus. That suggests there was a real tension in this era between the Greeks that traced their lineage back to colonists arriving after the end of the Bronze Age and those people who had remained in Miletus after the end of Hittite and Mycenaean hegemony, who themselves could be further subdivided into the descendants of Minoans and the rest of the inhabitants of the city.

Secondly, by the 7th century and possibly even earlier the Molpoi were an elite group performing paeans in Apollo Delphinios' honor. They articulated citizen identity at festivals and in the political sphere. But, the fairly arduous 18-km journey to Didyma is likely to have been a later new addition to their repertoire, once the oracular sanctuary had become important enough to be worth asserting control over it, certainly after the beginning of the 7th century. Maybe the procession gained importance in the 6th century, conforming to the fashion of creating a paved way to an extra-urban sanctuary. This does not mean that other groups had not been making the journey either to the Shrine of the Nymphs or to Didyma, by the route of the processional way or along the shore,[45] whose rituals were then coopted by the Molpoi. Indeed, I consider this a likely scenario. Regrettably, although we can be sure that the Molpoi existed before the shrine was important and before the construction of the Delphinion by the Lion Harbor, since we cannot be more precise with the terminus post quem for the Homeric hymn to Delian Apollo it is impossible to decide how the inception of the Molpoi procession related to the 6th-century stasis that was so well remembered by later authors, in which the Neileids seem to have played a part negatively construed. Was the original Molpoi procession to Didyma condemned by their contemporaries as another act of hybris on the part of the Neileids? Or, was it an attempt at reconciliation?

However, it is possible to observe that over the course of time the exclusive Molpoi organization pivoted away from articulating a colonist Neileid identity to define a – dare I say? – more inclusive identity, resolving tensions between groups claiming Ionian and Cretan heritage, but ignoring the complexities of Glaucid mythology altogether. At this point we have moved well beyond the concerns and factions inferable from the *Iliad.* In the 6th century, memories of Neileid foundations still clung to the old cult places: the shrine of Demeter Eleusinia at Mykale, the sanctuary of Artemis Kithone, the tomb of Neileos at the city gate.[46] But, they were not acknowledged in the route of the Molpoi procession accessible to us, perhaps because Neileid cult was considered divisive.[47] Instead, a different set of mnemotopes were recognized, mostly dealing with different aspects of citizenship on quite an abstract level, such as the divinities labeled Dynamis and Phylios. Note that the term Molpoi conveniently avoids any ethnic designation, putting the focus instead on the cult activities that were considered to redound to the city's favor in the eyes of the gods. Yes, the *basileus* who participated in the procession probably belonged to the Neileid genos,[48] as at Ephesus, where Strabo (14.1.3) says that the Codrid *basileis* (another elite group who claimed descendance from legendary Ionian colonizers) oversaw the *hiera* of Eleusinian Demeter.[49] However, it looks as if his prerogatives have been curtailed. At least, in the Molpoi inscription it is specified that while the *basileus* assists at their rites, "he does not receive any more than the other Molpoi" (22–23), as if at one time he had. We do not know, however, exactly when that occurred. Finally, we can suggest that the claim of Cretan identity was already important in the Bronze Age and regained power after the Classical period once Greeks had transitioned to having a conversation about their history only among themselves, the Carians now in an inferior position in local power dynamics.[50] By the Hellenistic period the Milesians were actively promoting a connection to Crete, adding 1,000 Cretans to the roll of citizens on the basis of the kinship "from the god,"[51] while the Neileids had been reduced to a symbol of the failures of kingship overcome.

[45] On the possible routes, see Slawisch and Wilkinson 2018.

[46] Tomb of Neileos: Paus. 7.1.6.

[47] See discussion of Polito 2018: 157–160.

[48] On evidence for a Neileid genos in the onomastics of Milesian inscriptions, see Mac Sweeney 2013: 50–52.

[49] The *basileus* played a role in other civic rituals, according to the Late Archaic calendar Milet I.3, 31.3. Herda 2006: 174–175, 229–234, offers a rather different analysis than that presented here; he considers the appearance of the *basileus* in the inscription to support an early 7th cent. date for the procession and that the tale of Nicolaus (*FGrH* 90 F52) describes how his political power came to an end, after which he was relegated to a priestly role.

[50] See further Bachvarova 2015, on the change in how history was constructed along the Aegean littoral of Anatolia from the end of the Bronze Age, when locals were ascendant, to the time of Herodotus, when Greek-speakers had full political control in their poleis.

[51] Milet I.3, 37, esp. ll. 2, 4–5, dating to 229/228; see Faraone 2018: 16–19.

Abbreviations used

CTH	Laroche, E. 1971. *Catalogue des textes hittites*. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck.
FGrH	Jacoby, F. (ed.) 1923–1958. *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*. Berlin and Leipzig: Brill.
Milet	Th. Wiegand (ed.) 1919-1929. *Milet: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899*. [1919: Band I, Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter & Co/ Berlin: Georg Reimer; 1929: Band II, Berlin: Hans Schoetz.]
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum. Amsterdam and Leiden: Brill

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Chapter 3:
Ancient images in Mesopotamia:
Ancient gaze and present observation between visual sources and textual sources. Questions and limitations

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Abstract. The present study regarding the long-debated issue of the relationship between texts and images in the Ancient Near East and the role, whether autonomous or not, played by visual narratives, is articulated in two parts. The first section concerns the current state of affairs and the outcomes of the debate, while the other one is centered on exemplary cases of the figurative documentation attesting how the image can transmit various levels of legibility, in a complex sequence of information mostly unaffected by the presence or by the absence of text. After recalling some unresolved issues, which stand at the outset of the observation and analysis of images, some focal points of previous research carried out by different scholars are considered and commented, while proposing to look at visual communication as a multiple system of data inferred from a specific analysis, with peculiar care to detail, aimed at the transmission to the observers, according to their perceptive qualities, by means of approach that differ from those typical of written sources. In broader terms, the image should not be considered subordinate nor complementary to the written document.

Keywords: visual communication, images and written sources, distinct points of view and means of approach, Mesopotamia and Syria, 4th–1st millennium BCE.

Tallay Ornan has devoted so much time to exploring, among other things, the fruitful field of iconography in the figurative documentation of the cultures of the Ancient Near East, bringing out its features and details capable of suggesting new interpretations and hypotheses on the meaning and significance of these works. I take the welcome opportunity of this tribute to her to propose some reflections and considerations on the topic of visual communication.

Among the numerous questions still open it is worth mentioning some of those that in my opinion come before the observation and analysis of the images, and to which a definitive and unanimous response has not yet been found. At the same time, these questions stimulate us to continue researching, and can be summarized as follows: have we lost the "ancient" gaze on the image? Can contemporary observation of the image adequately convey the meaning of the image itself, if only in part and despite the variables entailed by the viewer's subjectivity? How and to what extent are written sources of help in decoding the iconographical sources?

State of art

A key point with respect to these questions can be found in the illuminating essay by P. Amiet, long unpublished before its eventual appearance in revisited summary form by A. Thomas in homage to its author (Thomas 2018: 3–10). Here Amiet dealt with these and other questions, setting out his considerations on the unresolved rapport between textual sources and visual sources. Firstly, he states that in many cases – "paradoxically" – images may have been more eloquent than cuneiform writing, while today they present greater complexity to the gaze of the viewer because we do not have access to the same "environment" and above all to the same collective imaginary as the ancients. Secondly, Amiet criticizes the over-interpretation of iconography on the part of the orientalist scholars of his time resulting from their comparison with the written sources (Amiet in Thomas 2018: 4).

P. Amiet's key overview of the controversial rapport between text and image is encapsulated in his definition of a "Concordisme Abusif" (Amiet in Thomas 2018: 9) between the two types of documentary sources, and in his preference for an independent analysis of iconography, supported by the various significant examples proposed in his essay. These adopt a new methodology, defined in around the middle of the past century, which led Amiet and other scholars to define the function of images not just as a mere illustration to texts, as had been the case in the tradition of classical antiquity. The findings of new studies supported the theory that analysing the images independently opened up a new cognitive potential thanks to their decodification in the visual communication, where different or variant versions of the same "narrative"

content chronologically predated those of the written sources (Thomas 2018: 5).

It thus seems that the interpretation of images as illustrations to texts is in large part questionable,[1] and above all, in my opinion misleading for an exhaustive exegesis of the visual sources and their signifying value. Rather, this task should be tackled, as Amiet proposes, through an independent analysis that where possible is paralleled by that of the written sources, rejecting from the outset any preconception that the image is dependent on the text.

At the same time, other methodological approaches to the comparative evaluation of texts and images, and aimed at grasping correspondences between the two have often yielded important results.[2]

Among the studies included in a collective publication of 2014 (Brown and Feldman 2014), the issue of the relationship between texts and images was in some cases tackled in a way that is particularly pertinent to the questions proposed in this essay. For example, Jennifer C. Ross approaches the topic in terms of two contemporaneous and complementary spheres, writing and art, assuming that the most archaic lexical signs are to be sought in the iconography of the Late Uruk seals. Glyptics were an art form that pre-existed writing, certainly the principal medium of communication for the operations that she describes (Ross 2014: 295), but also a means of communicating and commemorating events and narratives in the form of images. The author hypothesizes that the first scribes were seal carvers, or at least had experience as such (Ross 2014: 295–296): in other words, she posits that the origins of writing should be sought in glyptic imagery[3] though the very plausible view expressed some time ago by Michalowski (1994), cited by Ross, suggests the contemporaneous existence of various interacting systems of communication as precursors in the complex process of the development of writing.

Also dedicated to the theme of the relationship between texts and images is a fairly recent Rencontre Assyriologique (Attinger *et al.* 2018) which, in addition to the unpublished essay by Amiet mentioned above written some time previously, contains a few essays touching on this issue from various points of view. The paper by N. Postgate expresses the hope that philologists and archaeologists will debate texts and images, though rightly expressing doubts over the priority ascribed to texts.[4] Instead, he proposes that it would be better to visualize the Mesopotamian world as "a three-dimensional body" with numerous facets, including the textual and visual evidence, avoiding the search for direct correspondences between the two. The essay by Pongratz-Leisten notes that the images of mythical narratives are never purely illustrative but rather offer an overview of key actions evocative of their protagonists-subjects in the mind of the viewer, in what he describes as a "phenomenon of recognition" on the part of the audience (Pongratz-Leisten 2018: 348, 350). Pongratz-Leisten's specific analysis gives rise, in my opinion, to a more general consideration on the rapport between the image and the viewer: the *observer* fixes the image with their eye but interprets it with their mind, in two distinct and connected operations that also underlie Pongratz-Leisten's exposition; the degree of interpretation depends on the attention and knowledge level of the viewer and on their cultural baggage, so to speak. It is worth noting that this applies to a viewer who is to a certain degree informed but who nonetheless does not seem to have been the only type of observer with access to the visual sources and who made up the audience;[5] the pictorial documentation aimed at a broader and thus more diverse audience generates different perceptive responses, both in terms of the quality and the extent of the impact, on the part of individuals.

The study by Paim Pozzer (2018, especially pp. 85–87), part of a broader project on iconography and inscriptions in Mesopotamian cylinder seals over a long timespan (late 3rd to 1st millennium BCE), adopts an interdisciplinary perspective and centres on the use "of the material culture as image-document," rightly noting that it is a means of communicating some messages that cannot be conveyed in written form and

[1] In this context I recall Amiet's observation that in the case of war and victory monuments the two forms of communication may be connected: Amiet in Thomas 2018: 7.

[2] As an example, among the numerous studies, I mention here just two on the documentation from Syria and from Mesopotamia between the 3rd and 1st millennium BCE: Archi 1990; Westenholz 2000.

[3] The proposals of Ross 2014, summarized on p. 298, fig.1, rule out a direct role of tokens in the development phase of the earliest writing. This contrasts with the hypothesis based on data that made it possible to reconstruct the transition from these prehistoric instruments of calculation to their depiction at the dawn of writing, a hypothesis that has largely been accepted by the academic community. Instead, Ross assigns to them "a major role" in the communication that preceded writing (Ross 2014: 303), stressing that from the tablets dated to the phase of Uruk V tokens were no longer in use, as the calculations were expressed by the numerical signs impressed on the tablets, referring to quantities and perhaps to the types of goods (Ross 2014: 306). Within this debate it is worth considering the study by Costello 2011, devoted some time ago to Neolithic visual culture in the Near East particularly on the basis of seals, which brings to light elements connecting the images to a basic cosmology and suggests a religious context and a meaning that precedes the evidence for their use in the administrative operations of the earliest complex urban communities.

[4] Postgate 2018: 17–18; in this context the author notes, on p. 17, D. Collon's agreement with the opinion of P. Albenda that texts may help to understand the iconography, but also that texts and images belong to different traditions, that in many cases cannot be correlated with one another.

[5] On this topic, the object of a wide-ranging debate, cf. already Liverani 1979 and especially 2014; an excursus on the issue in Mesopotamia is in Dolce 2020a and 2020b.

that the perception of the images by ancient users was different from ours today. In my opinion both these conditions must precede any attempt to evaluate the impact and function of the visual communication.[6]

Bahrani's vision, reported and shared by Pozzer (2018: 87), of abandoning the idea that every pictorial representation in the Ancient Near East was a means of imitating reality, arguing instead that those peoples trusted in the power of representative conventions and their status as an integral part of "reality," leads to the consideration that in ancient Mesopotamia the image was not considered similar to an original reality, present elsewhere, but was itself "real." In other words, the images contain reality within themselves, as in Mesopotamian thought each image corresponds to a genuine state of affairs, such that it can be described as an "image-document," as suggested, and thus considered a historical source.

The "image-document" produced in any artistic or artisanal genre finds in visual communication the means of transmission in the archaic societies of the Near East, spread and received to varying degrees, of "narratives," values and meanings that are partially echoed in the legacy of the collective memory (Dolce 2019 and 2020b).

The study by S. Graziani is in my opinion key in the examination and suggests some observations on the relationship between writing and images, and on the specific proposal of "reading seals like texts."[7] In this context she recalls the presence of pictograms, and thus of images, in proto-cuneiform writing and the role of writing, which never completely replaced other, already existing forms of communication such as images, which are nonetheless described as complementary rather than independent and in some cases concurrent languages in the transmission of messages;[8] in more general terms, the image should not be considered either subordinate or complementary with respect to writing and, in agreement with Graziani (2018: 68–69), as a bearer of information that in many cases goes beyond that in the text itself or of details missing in the text as occurs with the representations in the glyptics.[9] The conclusions drawn by the author lead to a proposition that I would sum up in the fact that communication takes shape in a multiple system of data, observations and, at times, details, which concur to reconstruct many aspects of the archaic societies of Mesopotamia, from points of view and means of approach that differ between text and image: in the former, the text, the reading of the sign; in the latter, the image, the gaze on the "subject" and the consideration of the impact that it will have on the viewer of the time and on the viewer of today. The image, though ostensibly more immediate and more accessible than writing in its reception by the observer, contains various levels of perception, comprehension and semantic meaning[10] and transmits various levels of legibility, in a complex sequence of information that is generally unaffected by the presence or otherwise of text.

The potential of visual language: some examples

Here I intend to recall as examples of the potential of visual language for the definition of the multiple meanings and values expressed and often also implied by each image, drawing prevalently on the documentation from Mesopotamia and in part from Syria, some significant case studies. These concern works of various types, generally widely known, dating to between the Protohistorical and Neo-Assyrian Periods. My analysis will focus on the independent identity of the image as a source, without underestimating its role in the development of the original writing.

The reading of the images unfolds on two levels of observation, often correlated, that of details of the representation of human subjects that allude to their identity; and that of the power of visual communication to capture subjects in situations or reciprocal relations that allow us to understand a specific state of affairs.

The fragmentary image on a seal impression from Uruk (Figure 1) affixed to a cuneiform tablet found in the stratigraphic context dated to the Protohistorical

[6] I refer readers to the reflections and the vision already developed on this by P. Amiet and reported in Thomas 2018, and to the considerations set out above.

[7] Graziani 2018, the same year as the publication by Attinger *et al.* of the Proceedings of the 61st RAI on the topic of the rapport between Text and Image.

[8] I share this latter opinion with some scholars reported above; Graziani's definition of the pictographic signs in written texts as themselves "writing in the form of images" suggests that they should be understood as archaic writing signs and not as images supporting the texts. The interdependence of visual and textual communication in archaic Mesopotamia is also noted by Winter, as Graziani (2018: 62–63, 65) reports, though she nonetheless remarks on the existence of cases in the "visual domain" distinct in their data from those of the textual sources.

[9] In the sealings used to guarantee documents, Walker and Altavilla 2009, in the volume cited by Graziani 2018: 70–72, note among various peculiarities in the documentation from the temple archives of Sippar the manner of impressing only part of the depiction on the cylinder seal, as if it were a stamp seal, the part showing a human figure. This may suggest a procedure for identifying the sender through the image as well; according to Graziani 2018: 72 it may be a sort of shorthand identification of the subject comparable, and I would add parallel, to the presence of just the initials in place of the complete name. A choice of this type was likely motivated by the limited space available on the documents, though we could also hypothesize an intentional rationale of selection in sealing operations, in other words that of a reduced and essential image, perhaps reserved for specific individuals among the ranks of the functionaries; this would indicate a change in the communicative conventions rather than a necessity dictated merely by the space available.

[10] Contributions to the topic and the considerations outlined here in brief can be found in Dolce 2020b and Dolce 2022a.

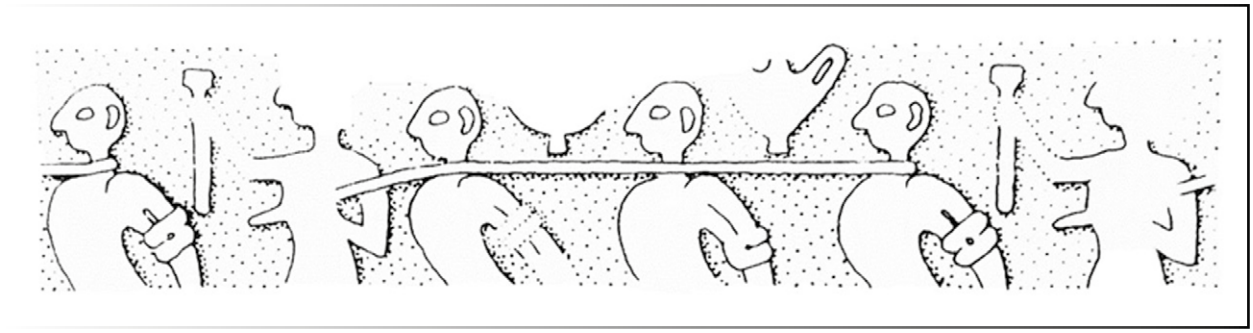

Figure 1. Cylinder seal impression with yoked prisoners. Uruk. Boehmer 2003: fig. 1.

Figure 2. Akkadian stele with yoked prisoners. Nasiriya. Moortgat 1969: pl. 136.

Figure 3. Obelisk (ASS 18616) with a parade of prisoners. Assur. Orlamünde 2011: taf. 2.

Period (Uruk IVa) (Boehmer 2003) shows some prisoners marched with their arms bound and neck immobilized by a yoke, similar to what occurs on one of the stelae attributed to the second generation of the sovereigns of Akkad (Figure 2) in agreement with Boehmer, but with a distinction that is in my opinion significant for the rationale of the visual communication and that concerns the secondary use of the yoke as a support for the transport of pots, certainly booty, paraded together with the prisoners. This use of the yoke, documented in the earliest period of Sumer, but currently without further parallels in other images from Mesopotamia for millennia, with the exception of a far more recent variant in the obelisk of Assur (Orlamünde 2011: 18–19, pls. 2, 3, I.4 a–b; ASS 18616) (Figure 3), provides evidence that already at Uruk there was a manifestation and display of the economic value of both men and the booty of war that was later amplified and displayed in particular in the images of conquests at the time of the Neo-Assyrian empire.[11]

Among the subjects portrayed in explicit relation to one another are parents and children. These images take various forms, from the most intimate level of natural relations, as in the recurrent birth scenes (Figure 4) and of completed maternity with breastfeeding (Figure 5), from the Early Dynastic to the Assyrian Period, to the attention given to offspring, as in the pictorial narratives showing mass deportations in the palatial reliefs of the Neo-Assyrian Period.

In the mid-3rd millennium BCE a peculiar instance of the representation of progeny concerns a pre-eminent family, that of the *ensi* Ur-Nanshe of Lagash and his acolytes in an official document *sui generis* (Figure 6): the series of so-called "family plaques." These should be considered a single visual document of a historical-genealogical and political nature in which we see the development of the "plan" for the initial succession to the throne within the dynastic family. We can deduce this from a series of observations, including the arrangement of the sons on several registers, each always identified by their own name, and of the acolytes; the placement of the *ensi*, who towers over a space reserved

[11] Cf. Dolce 2020b for further data.

Figure 4. Clay plaque with childbirth scene. Eshnunna. Suter 2017: fig. 6.

Figure 5. Female prisoners feeding newborns at their breast. North Palace, Nineveh. Photo by the Author. (BP exhibition "I am Ashurbanipal king of the world, king of Assyria" at the British Museum, 8 November 2018 – 24 February 2019).

Figure 6. "Family plaques" of *ensi* Ur-Nanshe of Lagash, Girsu. Moortgat 1969: pls. 109–112.

Figure 7. Inlay work panel with prisoners escorted by victors, Mari. Muller 2016: fig. 2.13.

for him; the sizes of the children, always smaller than the *ensi* and in positions that vary in their sequence on the four plaques, apparently not in response to uniform criteria, as has been noted (Romano 2014: 185 ff.) but rather, in my opinion, connected to the variable of the greater temporary visibility of one or other of the sons in their competition to succeed to power, over a certain period of time (cf. Dolce 2022b).

It is worth noting that on the most intact plaque of the four the supposed favourite to succeed to Ur-Nanshe, his son Akurgal, occupies a prominent position and wears a chignon of the type usually signalling royal rank. However, another figure precedes Akurgal, of a size intermediate between the ruling *ensi* and his sons, likely "outside" the dynastic branch and perhaps a high official, as has been proposed after other controversial hypotheses (Romano 2014: 190–191). From the observation of the details and the arrangement of the subjects we can deduce firstly that the power games are not completely over, perhaps due to the emergence of a "variable" in the form of another actor in the story, which would lead us to consider this "page" as probably the penultimate one, when the investiture of Akurgal is likely but not yet official; the visual document of the four plaques as a whole thus appears to be a witness, in a series of snapshots, to a particular period in the story of the ascent to power of the *ensi*'s future successor.[12] Secondly, the observation and reading of the final page of this document suggest that we are dealing with a critical phase in the management of power in the state of Lagash.

A recurrent gesture in images of the processions of the defeated in the documentation from the Early Dynastic

Figure 8. Victory panel with exhibition of severed heads of the defeated enemies. Royal Palace G, Ebla. Dolce 2014: fig. 8 a, b.

Period at Mari (Figure 7) and at Ebla (Figure 8) is the exhibition of "spoils of the enemy," hung on the tip of the lance resting on the shoulders of the victors. These are the garments of enemies, also displayed as trophies, belonging to prisoners who are paraded nude or subjected to torture by the victors. It is worth noting that over a period of roughly three millennia in the Mesopotamian pictorial documentation on the theme of war, garments do not appear neither in the heaping nor in the counting of the booty, regardless of their final destination and that, on the other hand, their presence on the victory panel from Early Syrian Ebla is also associated with the transport of the severed heads.[13] The signifying value of images may indicate the exemplary meaning of these garments: the spoils of the enemy displayed by the victors are an additional booty

[12] We can ask whether there was ever another figurative document of the same type that officially attested Akurgal's succession to his father.

[13] And it recurs on this work in the exhibition of those depicted as oversized, for some time considered to be those of prominent enemies.

alongside the severed heads of possibly important adversaries, as suggested by the Eblaite work, and are kept and displayed for this reason.

I would also call attention to some images that are an integral part of statues celebrating the victor of the moment, arranged on their bases and representing defeated, naked and dishevelled enemies, symbolically trodden beneath the feet of the victor, generally but not invariably anonymous.[14] Indeed, in an anonymous statue of the regal type from Susa, attributed to a king of Akkad or to an Elamite sovereign of the period of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (Tallon 1993) (Figure 9), these defeated enemies are not anonymous, but are each accompanied by his own name.[15] This distinction between anonymous and identifiable defeated enemies confers a different meaning on each group in the context of the visual communication. In the case of anonymity, the irrelevance of the identity of vanquished enemies is underlined, reducing them to an indistinct mass; when the identity of each individual is made explicit, they are on the one hand officially given the honour of their own visibility in the communication of events of particular importance while on the other an added value is conferred on the supremacy of the victor represented in the statue over important rivals.

Again, with reference to the topic of war and royal protagonists, I mention the compositional and narrative sequence of the killing of Tammaritu in the presence of his father Teumman on the sculpted orthostats of the South-West Palace of Nineveh (Figure 10), developed at a time of heightened emotional tension that only the images can convey. The son of the king is first annihilated by the mace blow delivered to his head and then decapitated, and his mutilated body lies next to his still living father. The sequence of actions offers us two opportunities for reflection: first that the common procedure of inflicting a mace blow on the head of the enemy could be followed by decapitation and that the "smiting procedure" might not always be the final lethal act; the other that the visual communication conveys to the observer an additional emotional charge affecting Teumman, already stripped of his dignity and marked out as a cowardly king in flight, as also noted by the legend: that of witnessing the torture and decapitation of his son.

Figure 9. Royal statue of an anonymous ruler (Sb48). Susa. Tallon 1993: figs. 1–3.

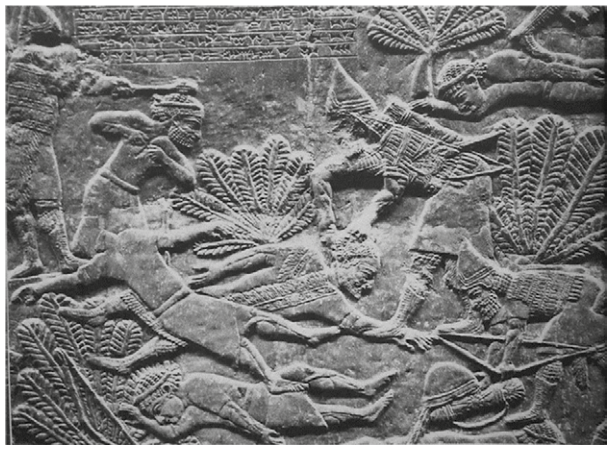

Figure 10. Beheading of Tammaritu before Teumman. South-West Palace, Nineveh. Watanabe 2008: fig. 8.

[14] The system of relations between the vanquished and the victor who treads the former beneath his feet is an established figurative convention from the Akkad period in Mesopotamia and appears as a *topos* in the official Egyptian documentation of the 3rd mill. BCE as well. Cf. the two enthroned statues inscribed with the name of the pharaoh Kha-sekhem of the II dynasty, found among the ruins of the ancient temple of Hierakonpolis (Quibell and Petrie 1900: 5, 11, pls XXXIX–XLI).

[15] In agreement with what frequently appears from Old Babylonian copies of inscriptions commemorating victorious military campaigns, inscriptions formerly placed on monuments of Ur III including now lost statues of sovereigns, accompanied on their bases by images of subjected individuals identified by legends; cf. Suter 2010: 328–330.

Of the other artistic genres that fall outside the official typologies and with a variable communicative impact on its recipients I would note the clay production, where in the clay plaques the details of the depiction reveal themselves to be precious sources of information on the system of figurative conventions, not limited to those known from the major documentation of celebratory works. Rather, we are dealing here with a world on a reduced scale, which preserves and transmits a sort of *summa* of actions and perhaps of some events aimed at consolidating the collective memory through key moments (Dolce 2019). An example is the plaque from Kish attributed to the Old Babylonian period (Figure 11) (Moorey 1975: 93, pl. XXIII, a) with the image of the victor triumphing over the defeated in accordance with a *topos* that persists even at the time of Hammurapi, reproduced here on an artefact belonging to a "minor" genre that certainly reflects the fashions of the monumental art of the period but in an unusual variant. Indeed, the victor tramples beneath his feet a heap of enemies and simultaneously dominates symbolically over other defeated enemies squatting with their arms tied behind their backs, as if to support on their own heads the heavy weight of the victor in the upper level. The depiction seems to result from a deliberate mixing of Mesopotamian figurative codes of the 4th and 3rd millennium BCE, in which enemies are held fast in various ways by fetters (from the glyptics of the Protohistorical Period) within a compositional arrangement that is interpreted in different ways, perhaps proper to productions of this type or echoing more major works of an official nature that no longer survive.

Figure 11. Clay plaque. Kish. Moorey 1975: pl. XXIII, a.

Some final remarks

There are various instances, prevalently from Mesopotamia, in which we can deduce that the visual language finds in clay production a deliberate way of conveying in the reduced space of a plaque the essence of a broader narrative developed in works of very different resonance. Alongside these are others in which the compositional development does not simplify the topic and suggests that the legacy on which this means of visual communication drew was more diverse than that currently visible in the major art. The clay plaques with their microcosm of images aimed at a very broad, though no longer appreciable, audience are small complete works with a role to play in the archaic cultures of the Near East that is perhaps still undervalued.[16]

[16] For considerations on the role of this clay production in the field of communication cf. Dolce 2019; Dolce 2020b.

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Chapter 4:
Naturalism, photography, and empire in the Old Akkadian period

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Abstract. Akkadian royal art has been celebrated for its apparent naturalism and realism since its identification by scholars in the late nineteenth century. First associated with the dynasty of Sargon and his grandson Naram-Sin through inscriptions on cylinder seals and then later on monumental works of sculpture, the corpus of Akkadian artworks has contributed significantly to our scholarly reconstructions of the history of the period. This essay explores how the art of the Akkadian rulers, through the entwined concepts of naturalism, photography, and empire, has come to speak for the historical reconstruction of the period. It proposes that our conceptualization of Akkadian dynastic rule as the world's "first empire" can be traced in part to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century associations between imperialism, photography, and naturalism.

Keywords: Akkadian empire, Akkadian art, sculpture, glyptic, cylinder seal, photography, naturalism, realism, imperialism, colonialism.

Modern scholars commonly describe the remarkable artworks produced for the Old Akkadian dynasty (ca. 2350–2100 BCE) as naturalistic.[1] Used almost exclusively with positive connotations, the descriptor generally serves to designate the Akkadian period as a departure from previous periods and its art as the expression of a nostalgically rendered golden age of "the first empire."[2] In this essay in honor of Tallay Ornan's many contributions to the study of Mesopotamian royal representations, I would like to probe how the art of the Akkadian rulers, through the entwined concepts of naturalism, photography, and empire, has come to speak in significant ways for the historical reconstruction of the period. Because the textual and archaeological evidence for the Akkadian period is sparse, artistic representations, including large-scale royal monuments and small-scale cylinder seals, have played an outsized role in its historical study, at times even unknowingly. And because ways of seeing have been shown to be historically specific (Lalvani 1996: 2; Nelson 2000), I propose that the scholarly reception of Akkadian art in the late nineteenth century – a time that valued artistic naturalism, saw the development of photography, and participated in expanding imperialism – has shaped historical reconstructions of the Akkadian period. Analyzing the reception and interpretation of these artworks, I suggest that some part of our conceptualization of the period of Akkadian dynastic rule as an empire – and in particular, as the world's "first" empire – can be traced to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century associations between imperialism, photography, and naturalism.

Naturalism in art historical studies of Akkadian royal art

Since the earliest discoveries of Akkadian-period art in the nineteenth century, European and North American scholars have lauded it for its apparent naturalism.[3] In the 1870s and 1880s, cylinder seals were among the first artworks attributed to the Akkadian rulers according to inscriptions on them, such as a seal in the de Clercq collection that names Shar-kali-sharri.[4] Seals of related style were likewise attributed to the period and praised for their finer execution relative to other known cylinder seals, especially with respect to the detailed rendering of anatomical musculature. The association of a purportedly naturalistic style of glyptic carving with the Akkadian dynasty took hold at this time and found a long life that undergirds ongoing conceptions of both Akkadian art and Akkadian political history. For example, in a short article of 1879, Joachim Menant first published a photograph of a seal impression of an Akkadian-period cylinder seal depicting what is now known as the "classic two-pair" contest scene and bearing an inscription of Bin-kali-sharri, a son

[1] "Realistic" is another common descriptor, which while often used interchangeably with "naturalistic" can also have distinct connotations and has a different developmental trajectory within the discipline of art history. I touch upon it at points in this essay, although my main focus is on the concept of naturalism.

[2] For the epithet "first empire" and its critique, see Liverani 1993a, 1993b, and further discussion below.

[3] For recent summaries of modern scholarly reception of Akkadian art, see the various chapters in Eppihimer 2019; although, she does not specifically address the issue of naturalism.

[4] Now in the Musée du Louvre AO 22303; Eppihimer 2019: 45–46, 150–152; Menant 1883: 71–83. At this time, the cuneiform writing system had just recently been deciphered, opening up these inscribed seals, many of which had been known earlier, to historical identification.

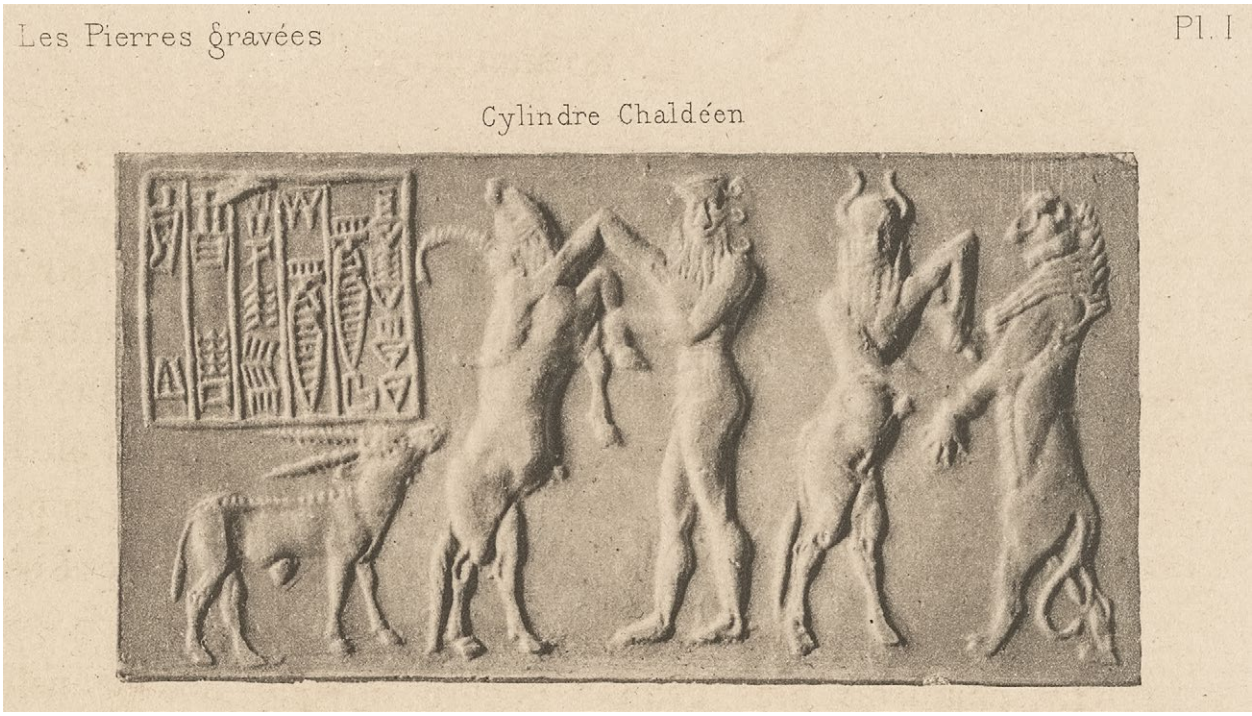

Figure 1. Photograph of cylinder seal impression with inscription of Bin-kali-sharri, son of Naram-Sin, after Menant 1883: pl. I, top.

of Naram-Sin (Figure 1).[5] After a close description of the imagery, Menant (1879: 479) concludes, "If we now examine the detail of these scenes, we see that the artist has scrupulously studied nature."[6] Menant included the seal in his book-length study of 1883, *Les pierres gravées de la Haute-Asie: Recherches sur la glyptique orientale*, part I, summarizing his 1879 discussion and praising the Akkadian seal (classified by Menant as Chaldean) for displaying "a force of conception and execution that proves that the artists were in full possession of their art ..."[7] In 1888, Ernest Babelon, a numismatist at the *Cabinet des Médailles* in Paris, published a popular and widely distributed volume on Near Eastern antiquities, *Manuel d'archéologie orientale: Chaldée, Assyrie, Perse, Syrie, Judée, Phénicie, Carthage*, which was translated into English in 1889 and which included the Bin-kali-sharri seal impression.[8] The English translation (Babelon 1889: 48) describes the seal thus, "[... it] is executed with a still greater perfection ... The play and graceful suppleness of the muscles of the bull and the lion are rendered with the precision which the direct study of nature brings ..." The similarity between Babelon's description of the seal to that of Menant's most likely indicates a direct borrowing from the earlier publication; and in the continued republication of both the seal and its aesthetic description, one can trace the legacy of its initial reception into future studies.[9]

The first large-scale sculpture attributed to the Akkadian period was the so-called Pir Hüseyn stele

[5] For the classic two-pair contest scene, see Rakic 2014. The seal inscription reads: "Bin-kali-sharri, the prince: Isinnum, the scribe, (is) his servant" (Frayne 1993: 178–179, E2.1.4.2022). The seal's current whereabouts are unknown (see Frayne 1993: 178–179, E2.1.4.2022; Rohn 2011: 39n313), making its outsized role in the formation of a narrative about Akkadian art particularly apropos for this article, which considers the role of photography in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship of the Akkadian period. Menant (1879: 478; 1883: 75) says that he knows the seal, which he claims is in the "Musée de New York," only from a cast, although he identified the material as possibly porphyry. Ward (1910: 20, 69–70, figs. 27 and 183) claims the seal was obtained by General di Cesnola in Cyprus, although there is no further evidence for this claim. Menant's reference to a New York museum continues to be cited by later scholars, although it is not in the collections of either The Metropolitan Museum of Art or The Morgan Library. The de Clercq seal cited above (note 4) also continues to be a foundational artwork in art histories of the Akkadian period.

[6] "Si nous examinons maintenant le détail de ces scènes, nous voyons que l'artiste a scrupuleusement étudié la nature."

[7] "... une puissance de conception et d'exécution qui nous prouve que les artistes étaient alors en pleine possession de leur art ..." Menant 1883: 31–32.

[8] WorldCat lists the volume as having 51 editions in three languages published between 1888 and 2017 (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79099118/> Accessed 1 September 2022).

[9] Frayne's (1993: 179) thorough bibliography of the seal up to 1993 includes publications following Menant's 1879 and 1883 publications, dating to 1888, 1892, 1900, 1907, 1910, 1926 (twice by Unger), 1929, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1968, 1968–69, and 1990, to which can be added Rohn 2011: 39n313. Of these, seven include the same photograph reproduced by Menant. Interestingly, Unger (1926a: pl. 157b; 1926b: 94 no. 41) splices the photo in order to rearrange the two combat pairs so that they flank the inscription. Menant (1883: 75) claims the stone looks like porphyry, which implies he saw it or a photograph of it at some point, but he also says that he knows the seal only from a cast, presumably meaning a cast of the impression although it could possibly be a cast of the seal itself.

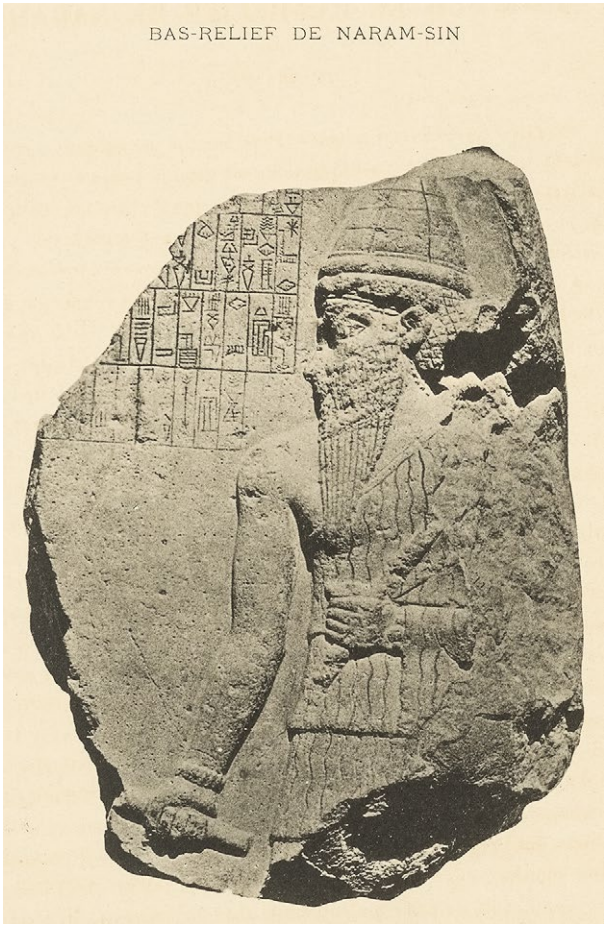

Figure 2. Photograph of Naram-Sin stele found at Pir Hüseyn, after Maspero 1893.

Figure 3. Photograph of Naram-Sin stele found at Susa, after Morgan *et al.* 1900: pl. X.

of Naram-Sin, first published by Vincent Scheil (the inscription) and Gaston Maspero (the relief imagery) in 1893 (Figure 2). Maspero (1893: 65), comparing the stele to previously known Assyrian and Early Dynastic sculpture (from Assyrian palaces and Tello), extols the Pir Hüseyn stele, "It [the Pir Hüseyn stele] offers none of these exaggerations of musculature, this dryness of line, this heaviness of drawing and execution that is seen on the best fragments of Assyrian sculpture; nor does it have the clumsy relief or the awkward chisel work seen on many of the reliefs from Tello."[10]

Not long after the publication of the Pir Hüseyn stele, a second stele bearing an inscription of Naram-Sin was excavated at Susa in 1898 (Figure 3) and published in 1900 (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 144–158). Today, the Susa stele, commonly referred to as "the Victory Stele of Naram-Sin," has almost entirely superseded the Pir Hüseyn stele as the primary exemplar of Akkadian royal art (Eppihimer 2019: 47). However, in the initial publication of the Susa stele in 1900, the Pir Hüseyn stele was judged its equal in its rendering of Naram-Sin's human figure, describing his face, despite damage, as "*un modèle parfait*" (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 155). Of the Susa stele, the body of Naram-Sin is praised for its naturalism and "happy proportions" (*grande vérité* and *heureuses proportions*) (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 147), although the landscape is derided as childish and lacking perspective (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 146).[11] Elsewhere on the stele, other human bodies (primarily those of the enemy) are lauded for their "astonishing realism"

[10] "Elle n'offre pas ces exagérations de musculature, cette sécheresse de ligne, cette lourdeur de dessin et d'exécution qu'on remarque sur les meilleurs morceaux de la sculpture assyrienne; elle n'a pas le relief maladroit et la gaucherie de ciseau qu'on observe sur beaucoup des reliefs de Tell-Loh." Maspero, an Egyptologist, continues by favorably comparing the relief to Egyptian sculptural relief. For further discussion on this comparison, see Eppihimer 2019: 44–45.

[11] "Les arbres rappelant les forêts sont d'une exécution enfantine; tout, dans ce qui a trait à la nature, est conventionnel et entièrement dépourvu de perspective ..."

(*réalisme étonnant*), their finely observed details, and their naturalistic poses (Morgan *et al*. 1900: 149).

The scholarly association of Akkadian art with naturalism and realism has only grown over time. In 1966, Helene Kantor made the case for an Akkadian artistic interest in landscape, drawing on both Naram-Sin's Susa stele and a small group of cylinder seals. Her argument rests on what she interprets as an imitation of nature, for example, in the specificity of marshy swamps in which water buffaloes roam (Kantor 1966: 146). While noting the absence of visual perspective or illusionistic depth, she credits Akkadian-period artists (what she calls Akkadian genius) with "... summing up the essence of mountain landscape, its trees, and the rushing streams supporting the vegetation, so as to give both the nexus of supporting forces overlaid with natural impression ..." (Kantor 1966: 152). The following decade, Pierre Amiet (1976: 6), in the introduction to his book on Akkadian art highlighting the collection of the Musée du Louvre, could write, "Stimulated by their royal protectors, the artists of Agade brought to perfection the concern for realism that awkwardly animated their presargonic predecessors."[12] More recent summaries of Akkadian art in two synthetic histories of the Akkadian period continue in this vein: Aage Westenholz (1999: 85, 88) uses the descriptors "vivid and detailed naturalism" and "accomplished combination of naturalistic and symbolic representation," while Benjamin Foster (2016: 219) writes of the "heightened naturalism" of Naram-Sin's body. More squarely art historical is Donald Hansen's (2003: 197) consideration of the "naturalistic gestures" of the soldiers on Naram-Sin's Susa stele, while the most recent textbook focused on Mesopotamian art introduces the Akkadian period thus, "During the Akkadian dynasty, in the reigns of Sargon of Akkad (r. 2334–2279) and his successors, the visual arts became increasingly concerned with naturalistic details and carving styles, a development that we can observe in every genre of representation" (Bahrani 2017: 113).

Naturalism in art history

Naturalism is a surprisingly undertheorized concept in art history. In the interests of space, I do not take it on in full here; however, I provide a brief sketch of some trends in its terminological and conceptual usage in the discipline, and in particular its relationship to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photography and imperialism, before I turn to examine how these art historical trends have impacted our interpretations of Akkadian royal representations and in turn our understanding of the Old Akkadian state. The term *naturalism* has been used in many different – sometimes even contradictory – ways over the course of the development of the academic discipline that has come to be called Art History. Though naturalism is often assumed to be a self-evident notion, a quick perusal of encyclopedia entries and art survey textbooks reveals a lack of consensus regarding its definition.[13] For some art historians, naturalism refers primarily to subject matter, with landscapes and scenes of everyday life being naturalistic in contrast to mythological or religious scenes (e.g. Needham 2003). Others associate naturalism with a manner of rendering images that closely reproduces perceived vision (Stokstad and Cothren 2018: xix). Many note the (potentially confusing) distinction between "naturalism" with a lower case "n" versus "Naturalism" with a capital "N," the former referring to any art that "attempts to depict reality as it is," while the latter refers specifically to a nineteenth-century movement begun in France and championed by Émile Zola (*The Art Story* 2018).

The term *naturalism*, as used in reference to art, is usually traced back to Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696), an Italian scholar and critic whose 1672 *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni* offered an "idealist" model for art (Bellori 2005; Bell and Willette 2002). Caravaggio, in particular, is singled out pejoratively by Bellori as painting in a manner that mechanically copied the real world instead of filtering nature through the intellectual pursuit of the Idea (Bellori 2005: 10; *The Art Story* 2018). For Bellori, nature was not the model to be pursued, because it contained deformities that hindered the attainment of perfect beauty (Fernie 1995: 58–61).[14] The use of the term *naturalism* as a descriptor of art exists in an uneasy tension with the concept of nature, *tout court*.[15] On the one hand, art has been seen as striving to reproduce visual perception – how things appear in nature. Yet on the other hand, art requires more than simple mechanical reproduction; it requires something beyond nature. Illusion and illusionism are similarly implicated in a complex and paradoxical relationship to art, being seen both as an indicator of

[12] "Aiguillonnés par leurs protecteurs royaux, les artistes d'Agadé portèrent à sa perfection le souci de réalisme qui animait maladroitement leurs prédécesseurs présargoniques."

[13] For example, see Needham 2003; Stokstad and Cothren 2018: xix; *The Art Story* 2018; Taggart 2021; *Art in Context* 2021; *Encyclopedia of Art History* n.d.; *Tate* n.d.

[14] "... originating in nature, it [the Idea] transcends its origins and becomes the original of art; measured by the compass of the intellect, it becomes the measure of the hand; and animated by the imagination it gives life to the image ... Thus the Idea constitutes the perfection of natural beauty and unites truth with the verisimilitude of things that appear before the eye, always aspiring to the best and to the marvelous, so that it not only rivals but becomes superior to nature, revealing its works to us elegant and finished, whereas nature is not wont to display them to us perfect in every part ... Instead nature is for this reason so inferior to art that artists pursuing likeness and the complete imitation of bodies, without selection or choice of the Idea, were criticized for it: Demetrius was accused of being too naturalistic ... just as in our time Michelangelo da Caravaggio was too naturalistic, he painted men as they are ..." (Bellori 2005: 57–58). For discussion of the complexity of Bellori's theoretical stances, see Montanari 2005.

[15] Nature is itself a fraught concept that I do not have time to unpack here, but see Descola 2013.

artistic skill and as a lack of creative genius. The push and pull between the interpretation and valuation of these concepts has animated art historical theory ever since (Wood 2013).

This modern art historical concept of naturalism has a purported origin in ancient Greek and Roman sources, which Bellori drew upon for his own proposition of the Idea,[16] especially with respect to the Greek concept of *mimesis*. Yet there persists a fuzzy articulation of the relationship between artistic production, visual perception/illusion, and the real world. Jeremy Tanner (2006) has argued that the shift from the Archaic style ("hard" and "austere") to the Classical style ("naturalistic") marks an increase in viewer engagement with divine images, working from an implicit, though uncritical, assumption that the Classical style was more affective than the earlier Archaic style, and he associates this stylistic shift with the rise of democracy in the Athenian polis.[17] However, as pointed out in one review of the book (Baebler 2006), the coincidence of what has been identified as naturalism with democratic impulses – a favorite theory of the European Enlightenment – is belied by the appearance of similarly naturalistic artistic forms from other parts of the Greek world that did not embrace a democratic political system. Moreover, in reading Tanner's analysis of the distinction between Archaic and Classical cult statues, one senses that he himself has fallen into the trap of assessing art through a lens in which this very manner of classical rendering has been privileged, *a priori*, as both naturalistic and of the highest quality. For example, Tanner (2006: 31–34) contrasts a Classical statue of Athena (known from a marble Roman copy, the so-called Velletri Athena) with an earlier Archaic period metal figurine from Tegea and a sculpted *kore*. He writes (2006: 33–34), "The closed self-sufficiency of the archaic Athenas is replaced by a goddess who seems to live and move in the same space as the viewer. Her weight is divided between her left leg and her right arm, outstretched to support her on a spear. Her arms reach forward into the viewer's space, embracing that space and by extension the viewer." However, in looking at the Archaic examples, they too have arms extended outward into the viewer's space, holding spears and other paraphernalia; "naturalism" appears to be primarily the expression of non-axial or unbalanced bodily postures that has been read as "lifelike."[18] In contrast, Richard Neer (2010) has challenged the conventional narrative of Greek art as progress towards greater naturalism, arguing that the changes seen to characterize the shift from Archaic to Classical should be understood as ongoing experiments (continuous rather than disjunctive with the archaic period) employed by artists to evoke wonder (*thauma*) in the viewer.

Further complicating the situation is the ambiguous relationship between the concepts of naturalism and realism. Though often used interchangeably in general art historical writing, *naturalism* and *realism* have been distinguished from one another in a variety of (sometimes conflicting) ways.[19] Sometimes, naturalism is considered a manner of rendering, while realism refers to subject matter that falls outside of "high art"; however, this distinction can be inverted, with naturalism referring especially to artworks of (and often painted in) landscapes (that is, nature) and realism denoting a hyper-photorealistic appearance.[20] Within the scholarship of Ancient Near Eastern art, Diederik Meijer (2016: 236–240) distinguishes between "realism," which encompasses the cultural conventions that create an art work that is perceived as realistic, and "naturalism," which is "objectively comparable to a recognizable natural form." In other words, for Meijer (2016: 239), naturalism is rooted in universal perceptions (what he calls *etic*), whereas realism refers to how a particular culture would see an artwork (or *emic*). Meijer (2016: 236) acknowledges that his distinction is idiosyncratic, writing, "Since the two terms [realism and naturalism] exist, we might as well use them discriminately instead of indiscriminately, if only as heuristic tools." Ultimately, his exploration of the two terms stops short of delving into each term on its own, leaving his conception of naturalism "as more 'photographic'" still undertheorized.

Realism, as with naturalism, serves double duty, as both a general descriptor for the visual appearance of an artwork (that is judged as replicating reality in some way) and as an art movement begun in the nineteenth century (associated most closely with the French painter Gustav Courbet), but then adopted in the later part of the century and through the twentieth century by art groups associated with national, political, and ideological movements (for example, Social Realism). With respect to Naturalism and Realism as art movements, the distinction has tended to see Realism as tied more overtly to social activism than Naturalism,

[16] Bellori constructs his argument primarily though the stitching together of citations from Greek and Latin authors, including Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Ovid among others, which praise great artists for perfecting upon nature. See the endnotes in Bellori 2006: 63–65.

[17] "First, the motivation for the development of a new artistic language [of naturalism] was conditioned by the overthrow of the old aristocratic regime and the discrediting of both the status order associated with it and the expressive languages through which that status hierarchy was manifested" (Tanner 2006: 94).

[18] It is worth noting that the *kore* Tanner illustrates in fig. 2.5 (Antenor's Kore, Kore 681 from the Acropolis) is broken at the elbow of the right arm, which would have extended outward into the viewer's space but has been left unrestored.

[19] Naturalism coexists with a complex of terms that are all similarly slippery to define – for example, visual perception, lifelikeness, *mimesis* – in addition to realism.

[20] These two aspects of the distinction between naturalism and realism are discussed in, among others, *Encyclopedia of Art History* n.d.; *Taggart* 2021; *Tate* n.d.

which has closer ties to empiricism and the observation of nature. In sum, both terms have been used in multiple, sometimes contradictory, ways, which makes defining their relationship to one another and to any particular artwork challenging.

Photography, empire, and Akkadian art

While the roots of naturalism as an art historical notion reach back to the seventeenth century, it is during the nineteenth century that several critical strands converge to make it an especially influential concept. Perhaps the most obvious of these was the development of photography. It seems not coincidental that a self-consciously expressed notion of naturalism (etymologically linking to the concept of nature and not reality) was articulated by Zola and taken up by artists (especially painters) at the same time that photography was invented and became widespread. Photography emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a modern technology able to ostensibly reproduce "real life" accurately and objectively, with implications for the documentation and surveillance of a wide range of subject matter, including undesirable, questionable, or exotic peoples and things (Sekula 1986). Like the concepts of naturalism and realism, photography raised questions about what constituted art and about its relationship to a notion of artistic production, and it shaped new ways of looking at ancient art.[21] As Lalvani (1996: 2) notes, "The invention of photography is a crucial moment in the development of a modern structure of vision ... in legitimizing specific forms of subject-object relations, technologies of vision like photography, embedded within particular discursive and cultural formations, organize specific relations between knowledge, power, and the body." Photography has been, and often continues to be, thought of as an innocent reproduction of what the eye sees and the mind perceives, and thus it stands as the most "naturalistic" of all visual practices. However, photography has "itself become a model of human perception, the norm for the appearance of things" (Ryan 1997: 19) in which the conventions of perspectival realism espoused in nineteenth-century photography served to shape and bolster ways of seeing and appreciating images.

The development of photography in the nineteenth century also coincided with an expansion of imperialist endeavors by western European nation-states (Ryan 1997; Hight and Sampson 2002).[22] The use of photography to document and study colonial regions contributed to what James Ryan (1997) has called an imperial imaginary. The photograph emerged in this context as a "powerful indexical sign" (Ryan 1997: 17) that was seen to objectively record external truths.[23] This documentary aspect of photography played a critical role in imperial control, a component that began even before the development of the technology, for example, in large-scale scholarly missions such as that of Napoleon's group of *savants* who accompanied his military campaign to Egypt from 1798 to 1801, resulting in the multi-volume, *Description de l'Égypte*.[24] Photography became a perfect accomplice in these endeavors, as both a producer of knowledge and as a visualization of empire; that is, through photographs, not only was knowledge of distant places and ancient times such as the Near East produced and disseminated, mental images of these times and places were formed by their viewers.[25]

One of the most powerful ways photography was (and continues to be) deployed was to capture the likeness of human beings for both portraiture and objectification, making the human body visible as a subject and object of knowledge (Lalvani 1996).[26] In colonial contexts, photographing the human body of the "other" (the so-called native) took on special importance (Ryan 1997: 140–182). Such documentary impulses are linked directly to the pursuits of physiognomy and phrenology, which took the outward appearances of human figures as a kind of topographic map of essentialized, internalized identities (Sekula 1986: 11–14; Lalvani 1996: 87–137; Ryan 1997: 146–148),[27] and these practices were extended back in time using ancient sculpture in place of actual human beings (Evans 2012: 24–30). Thus, at the time when Akkadian art was being identified and recovered from excavations in the later part of the nineteenth century, photography was assuming

[21] For a discussion of the relationship of photography to ancient Greek art, see Stager 2023.

[22] Non-Western-European-based imperial endeavors also drew upon the documentary and controlling force of photography, such as the Ottoman Empire (Çelik 2011: 447–454; Çelik and Eldem 2015).

[23] Ryan (1997: 17) quotes a publication from 1854 that espouses the employment of photographs as aids "where *truthful* delineations of natural objects were of importance ..." (italics in the original). With respect to archaeology, Bohrer (2005: 181) cites August Salzmann from 1856, with reference to his photographs of ancient Jerusalem, "Photographs are more than tales [*récits*], they are facts endowed with a convincing brute force [*une brutalité concluante*]."

[24] For a basic overview of Napoleon's interventions in Egypt and the production of the *Description*, see Beaucour *et al.* 1989; and for a more critical review, see Bahrani *et al.* 2011: 22. The *Description* has been referred to by Edward Said (1979: 84) as "that great collective appropriation of one country by another." Stager (2023: 24), however, explores how photography was used not only for colonial/imperial identity making, but also for local, indigenous identity making in the modern nation-state of Greece; for early twentieth-century Chinese cultural identity and photography, see Liu 2014, and for African indigeneity and photography, see Bajorek 2020: 9–11.

[25] For a general overview of nineteenth-century photography in the Near East, see Perez 1988. For a comparable example of how photography constructs ancient places in a Chinese context, see Liu 2023, and for India, see Guha-Thakurta 2004, esp. ch. 1. For the specific relationship of archaeology and photography, see Bohrer 2011.

[26] The line between portraiture and objectification often blurred with photography as Lalvani (1996) demonstrates.

[27] Sekula (1986: 11) cites Johann Caspar Lavater's late eighteenth-century claim that the "original language of Nature, written on the face of Man" could be accessed through a close analysis of the physical features of the human body and especially the face and profile of the head.

a critical place in multiple fields that touched, either directly or indirectly, on the Akkadian artworks. Not least of these was the very dissemination of the objects themselves through the medium of photography, especially notable in the Bin-kali-sharri cylinder seal, the same photograph of which has been repeatedly reproduced since its initial publication in 1879 without any indication of any of the scholars having actually held or looked at the seal itself.[28] At the same time, the documentary aspect of photography, which was taken as a given, offered access to racialized interpretations based on physiognomy and phrenology. This is evident, for example, in the initial publication of the Naram-Sin stele found at Susa, in which the authors provide an extended discussion of the "*caractères ethnographiques*," in which the profiles of the various depicted figures (Figure 4) are assembled for comparative purposes (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 151–154, figs. 367–378).[29]

On the other end of the valuation spectrum, lifelikeness in the rendering of human bodies, generally equated with volumetric forms, expressive postures and gestures, and the depiction of anatomical accuracy, was celebrated in the nineteenth century.[30] Indeed the anatomical details of Renaissance Italian artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci set an exemplar of this line of thinking, which in turn connected back in time to Classical Greek sculpture, which not coincidentally was held up as one of the best subjects for early photography (Stager 2023). This art historical context primed late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars to positively receive the depicted musculature of the Akkadian rulers, seemingly a first in human history. While political and state formation, *per se*, did not constitute a topic of particular interest to scholars until later in the twentieth century (Liverani 1993a: 3), artworks considered of high aesthetic quality were understood to necessarily be the products of the most powerful political entities. For example, in Maspero's (1893: 66) discussion of the Pir Hüseyn stele, he explains the stylistic difference between Naram-Sin's stele and various monuments from the site of Tello (ancient Girsu, excavated by a French team starting in 1877)[31] as the result of their purportedly different

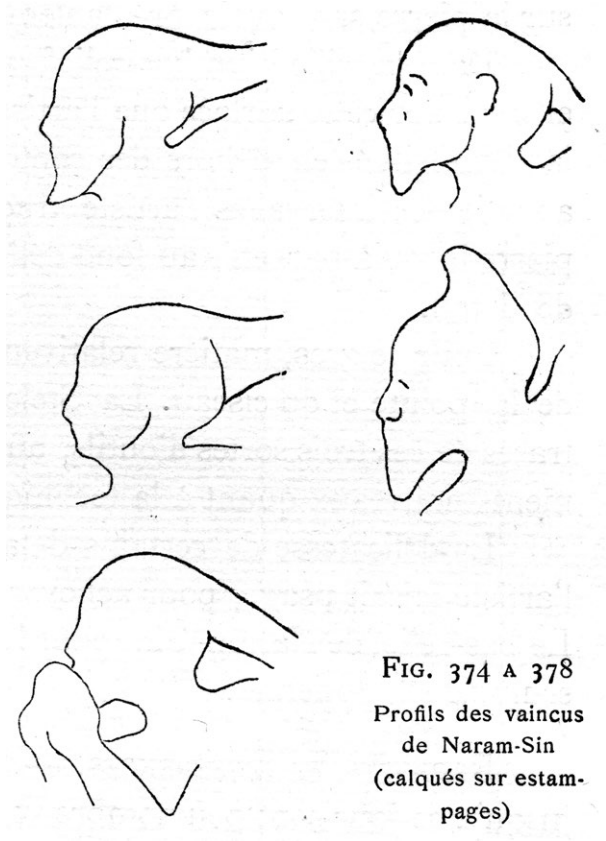

Figure 4. Line drawing of profile heads of the defeated enemy from Naram-Sin's Susa stele, after Morgan *et al.* 1900: 153, figs. 374–378.

political origins: Tello being a provincial town, while Babylon (to which the Naram-Sin stele was ascribed without any evidence) was, from its beginning, "a very grand city, rich, powerful, where princes built much."[32] Thus, although Akkadian monuments were not, at this early date, explicitly linked to a specific empire or to imperialism more generally, their early scholarly reception established the groundwork for such an identification when, later in the twentieth century, the question of classifying political types of ancient polities became a pressing concern.

Conclusions

"Sargon's dynasty includes some of the most famous kings in all of Mesopotamian history. Their fame is due, not only to what we know from contemporary sources, but even more to the fact that two of them, Sargon and Naramsin, were celebrated in native Babylonian saga and legend for the next 2000 years"

[28] For a seminal early text on how to photograph sculpture, see Wölfflin 2013 (originally published as three separate essays in 1896, 1897 and 1915); for further discussion of the Wölfflin text and the use of photography in early art history of the Italian Renaissance, see Johnson 2013. Photography, however, was not ideal for reproducing cuneiform texts, which Robson (2013: 212) notes "are notoriously resistant to photography."

[29] These racialized interpretations include statements such as: "Les Négritos sont brachycéphales et diffèrent entièrement des Sémites" (Morgan *et al.* 1900: 153). For overviews with bibliography of the early twentieth-century racialized explanatory framework of migrating ethnic groups (in the case of the Akkadians, these are Semites who are displacing Sumerians) see Liverani 1993a: 2; Evans 2012: 15–75.

[30] And photography supported these values in its production of portraiture that pictured "ideal" social types (Belden-Adams 2021).

[31] These monuments include those from the Early Dynastic period, such as the Stele of the Vultures, but also those from Gudea's reign, which were at the time thought to predate rather than follow the Akkadian period.

[32] "... une très grande ville, riche, puissante, dont les princes construisaient beaucoup ..."

(Westenholz 1999: 17). Aage Westenholz (1999: 18–19) continues, in the introduction to his history of the Old Akkadian period, to describe the significant lacunae in our knowledge of the Akkadian period, including the archaeological absence of its capital city, Agade, and the resulting conflicts in scholarly opinion.[33] Seventeen years later, Benjamin Foster (2016: xv–xvi) echoes these sentiments, noting the "rich but fragmented" nature of contemporaneous sources and the varied, sometimes conflicting, interpretations of them. The political history of the Akkadian period has been reconstructed in large part according to inscribed royal monuments, either surviving (such as Naram-Sin's steles and the Bin-kali-sharri cylinder seal) or whose inscriptions were copied in antiquity.[34] The question of whether Sargon's dynasty qualifies as an empire, and more specifically as the world's first empire, came to occupy a central place in scholarship during the second half of the twentieth century. The problem rests not only on interpretation of the ancient evidence but also on an individual scholar's definition of empire.[35] If one strips away later legends and takes only contemporary sources, even including those copied in the second millennium, there is little to suggest territorial conquests in far distant lands (Westenholz 1999: 27). The later legends, however, offer tantalizing possibilities of much more extensive domination (Michalowski 2020). Nonetheless, and despite a general hedging, the acceptance of an Akkadian empire has become increasingly entrenched, if only through the use of the term as a common epithet for the dynasty.[36]

As a conclusion to this exploration of the modern reception of Akkadian art, I would suggest that the modern perception of Akkadian art as naturalistic, and the explicit designation of this term to characterize its royal artistic production, has helped to support a modern conception of the Akkadian state as imperial. Furthermore, I propose that photography played a critical role in linking naturalism and empire, and that it directly affected the study of the Akkadian period in multiple ways. For one, photography bolstered a growing art historical appreciation for the ability to create "photographically realistic" art objects in other media, making the detailed musculature of Akkadian art appear naturalistic and thus accrue positive aesthetic value. In addition, photography at large was instrumental in nineteenth-century imperialism, deeply imbricated with both colonial and local identities. Last, photography offered a powerful new means by which to know and study Ancient Near Eastern art. These three elements came together in the early formation of the scholarly reception of Akkadian art, which was able to be studied through the medium of photography; was bound up in imperialist practices of appropriating and displaying "captured" objects from colonized locales; and served to substantiate a link between the Akkadian dynasty and a myth of the "first empire" that has conditioned our historical reconstructions of this period since.

[33] See his summary of surviving evidence, as of 1999, for the period (Westenholz 1999: 19). Schrakamp (2020: 616–618) provides a recent summary of sources for the Akkadian period.

[34] Schrakamp (2020: 616) estimates these at around 150 in number (compared to around 8000 administrative documents), but notes that most of these are part of copies made during the early second millennium of monuments set up in temple courtyards. See also Frayne 1993 for a complete publication of Akkadian royal inscriptions, including information on their material supports.

[35] In general, see the contributions in Liverani 1993b.

[36] Even Liverani (1993a,1993b), who has most forcefully argued for a critique of empire, titled his edited volume, *Akkad: The First World Empire*. More recently, fully supporting a view of the Akkadian state as imperial, Benjamin Foster (2016) titled his book, *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia*.

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Chapter 5:
A reassesment:
Is the cone-shaped object held by the genii in Aššurnaṣirpal II's palace at Kalḫu a citron?

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There is, I think, evidence enough to show that the Assyrians must have been well acquainted with the citron, and I thought that possibly the figures holding a cone-fruit might be intended to represent some ceremony in which the citron played a part, and from which the Jews had derived their citron ceremony, having been in contact with the Babylonians during their captivity.
Emanuel Bonavia (1894: 70)

Abstract. This article proposes that the cone-shaped object held by genii displayed on the walls of Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu is a citron (*Citrus medica*). This identification was first raised by Emanuel Bonavia in 1870 but then rejected. The Assyrians called the cone-shaped object a purifier (*mullilu*), and pharmacological research has shown that the citron has important purification and medicinal properties, strengthening the identification. Lastly, an argument is proffered explaining how the citron, known as *etrog*, arrived in Judah, an essential component in the Succot festival.

Keywords: citron, *Citrus medica*, *etrog*, purifier, *mullilu,* perfume, genii, Aššurnaṣirpal II, Kalḫu

There are 221 protective genii depicted on the wall reliefs of Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest Palace at Kalḫu who hold a cone-shaped object in their right hand (Figure 1),[1] known as a purifier (*mullilu)*[2] and in their left hand a bucket (*banduddû)* (Figure 2).[3] They are displayed in Rooms B, C, F, G, H, I, L, N, S, T, and Z, and on the façade of Room B. In ten of the rooms, stylized trees are also carved on the reliefs, and approximately half of them are flanked by protective genii.

Because the genie–tree–genie configuration was repeated multiple times—particularly in Rooms F, I, and L—these reliefs, superfluous to the requirements of The British Museum, were often the ones sold to interested visitors at Nimrud and eventually made their way into private collections or were presented to eager new museums around the world. Unfortunately, the genie–tree–genie configuration, when viewed out of context, generated the erroneous idea that genii who held a cone-shaped object were always associated with a stylized tree. In fact, the majority of these genii are located at entranceways or standing behind the king or the palace elite and less than half of them stand on either side of a stylized tree.

The 221 cone-holding genii are depicted as winged males, 118 with bearded human heads and 103 with bird heads, known as *apkallū* (Figure 3). The human-headed genii protect the king, the palace elite, and entranceways, while the bird-headed ones protect some of the entranceways, and often, together with the stylized tree, whole rooms. Room F of the throne-room suite is unique, as it is the only palace room with reliefs that depict solely bird-headed genii holding cone-shaped purifiers interspersed between stylized trees.[4] However, it must be noted that even in Room F the majority of the genii, although interspersed between stylized trees, stand with their backs to them. It should

[1] There are other genii that variously hold plants or animals, or simply raise their hands in a gesture of greeting or protection. This article deals solely with genii classifies as Type II (Kolbe 1981: 14–30) and concentrates on the genii from the Northwest Palace at Kalḫu. Later palaces relegated the genii to doorways, and they were significantly fewer in number (Ornan 2004–2005: 84, 88; Kertai 2015: 349).

[2] Variously referred to as a "purifier," "purification instrument," or "cleaner" (see Wiggermann 1992: 48, 67, 217).

[3] A *banduddû* is always held in the left hand when the cone-shaped purifier is held in the right. The buckets were originally made of plaited reeds and coated with bitumen in order to carry liquids. However, those depicted on the Assyrian reliefs were made of metal, although some were decorated to imitate basketwork (Wiggermann 1992: 66) (See Figure 2).

[4] In all other palace rooms, the majority of genii are human headed, and there is a variety of scenes depicted.

Figure 1. Cone-shaped objects held by genii from Aššurnaṣirpal II's palace.

Figure 2. Assyrian Bucket on display in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. AN1951.352.

also be noted that reliefs showing stylized trees and genii holding a cone-shaped object are virtually unique to Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest Palace.[5]

Figure 3. An *apkallū* holding a cone-shaped object. On display in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

[5] In the palace of Tiglath-Pileser III (r. 745–727 BCE) the stylized trees appear only in the corners of certain rooms (Russell 1998: 689). The palace of Sargon II (r. 722–705 BCE) had stylized trees in the corners of the three rooms with single register reliefs (Rooms 4, 8, 14) and next to Entrance I in Room 13 and Monument X. These were not

Figure 4. Cedar Cones; upper right, growing on the tree; lower right, freshly picked; upper left, the now moldy cedar cone after soaking in water for a week; lower left, a dry and opened cedar cone 4 weeks after being picked. This simple experiment proves that the cone-shaped object could not be a fir-cone. See Appendix on page 57.

Frans Wiggermann pointed out that it is "not necessary to understand the meaning of the tree in order to understand the meaning of the figures with bucket and cone" (1992: 97). Therefore, if the genii holding the cone-shaped objects are not using them specifically in conjunction with the stylized trees, what are they doing, and what are these cone-shaped objects?

The Cone-Shaped Object

Unfortunately, partly due to the dispersal of the reliefs, the mistaken impression was created that the genii holding cone-shaped objects were always flanking a stylized tree and tending to it in some fashion. That is, it was presumed that a symbiotic relationship existed between these two motifs, and discussion quickly arose as to what the configuration represented.

In 1890 Sir Edward Burnett Tylor suggested that the genii were artificially pollinating the stylized tree, which represented a date palm, and he identified the cone-shaped object as the pollen-laden spathe of a male date palm.[6] This theory was, however, immediately rejected by Emanuel Bonavia (1894: 74) and later by Cyril J. Gadd (1948: 91–92). Instead, Bonavia (1894: 10) proposed that the cone-shaped object was a citron.[7] Yet his theory received little attention and was, eventually, rejected by Bonavia himself.

It appears that Bonavia became influenced by the work of François Lenormant (1882: 92–93), who identified the cone-shaped object as a fir cone (Figure 4), *terinnu* (Wiggermann 1992: 67). Bonavia, accepting that Lenormant's identification was possibly correct,

flanked by genii. The important entrances in Sargon II's palace were protected by genii holding a cone-shaped object (and genii holding other protective devices); however, they never appeared flanking a stylized tree.

[6] Mariana Giovino (2007) has thoroughly researched the debate surrounding the stylized tree or sacred date palm from Tylor onward; therefore, only a few pertinent points will be dealt with here. (For a more recent analysis, see Franklin 2021).

[7] *Citrus medica* L. is commonly known as a citron, or *etrog* in Jewish ritual. The term "citron" will be used here.

proffered a compromised solution: noting that the genii who held a cone-shaped object in their right hand always held a bucket in their left hand, he suggested that the two objects had a symbiotic function. Being a native of Malta, Bonavia was apparently influenced by the practice of the Maltese church, where congregations are sprinkled with water as part of church ritual. The water is held in a container (*aspersorium*) and is dispersed using a sprinkler (*aspergillum*). Realizing that the Assyrian buckets held by the genii were made of metal, he suggested that they held water and served as *aspersoria*, and, therefore, the cone-shaped object, if a fir cone, was an *aspergillum* (Bonavia 1894: 74–86). It is worth noting that the purification in the Maltese church is achieved by the water held in the *aspersorium* (equated with the bucket) not by the *aspergillum* (equated with cone-shaped object).

This article revives Bonavia's original identification of the cone-shaped object with the citron[8] and argues that it was the citron's special aromatic properties that purified and protected the king and his palace.

Purification with Aromatic Oils

Purification rites were a widespread practice in the ancient Near East (Fappas 2011: 498), and the use of oil to purify was part of a complex ideology in existence since the third millennium BCE (Fappas 2011: 495). Olive oil was usually the preferred purifier; however, plain oils such as ben, sesame, horseradish, and almond were also used in Mesopotamia and Egypt (Brun 2000: 217), while there is evidence for the use of sesame and safflower oils at Knossos, Hagia Triada, and Mycenae (Brun 2000: 281). These oils are not naturally sweet smelling and needed to be perfumed. To achieve this, the oil had to be rendered astringent by heating it and combining it with certain plants such as sedge. The required aromatic essences were extracted by maceration of fragrant plants (e.g., myrtle, cypress, opopanax resin, odorous reed, galbanum, storax, and rockrose) (Brun 2000: 278). The aromatic essences also needed to be heated, a technique known as *enfleurage*—only then could the aromatic essence and the oil be blended and boiled.[9] Finally, a fixative such as resin was added to the resultant aromatic oil, rendering it less volatile (Brun 2000: 277–278). In eighteenth-century BCE Mari the complete production process is recorded as taking approximately two weeks and was overseen by a perfume maker (*lù raqqû*) (Brun 2000: 278). In thirteenth-century BCE Assyria the perfumers (*murraqitû)* were women (Brun 2000: 278); in fourteenth–thirteenth century BCE Knossos the perfumer was known as "the Cypriot" (*kupirijo*), while contemporary perfume workshops are also known from Mycenae, Thebes, and Pylos (Brun 2000: 281).

An important source for understanding the transmission of aromatic oils in the ancient Near East are the Amarna Letters (Fappas 2012: 163). In particular, they reveal the belief in the power of anointing the body, especially the head, with oil. For example, EA 34 (lines 50–53) relates: "I herewith send a *hahannatu* -jar [that] is full of sweet oil to be poured on your head, seeing that you have sat down on your royal throne" (Fappas 2011: 496; 2012: 165). Anointing with oil to purify is described in the Maqlû ritual at Nineveh (7.31–49; see also Fappas 2011: 498).

Texts attributed to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (r. 1244–1208 BCE) from Aššur describe the preparation and use of these perfumed oils, for example, VAT 10165 (lines 8–9): "Preparation of perfumed oils... for the festival when perfumed oil will be poured on the head of the king according to the instructions of *Belat-ekalle*, the perfume maker" (Fappas 2011: 496–497).

Anointing with oil was an important rite during the accession of a king. The new Hittite king, Ḫattušili III (r. 1264–1239 BCE) complained to Shalmaneser I of Assyria that he had neglected to send the perfumed oil he had requested (Fappas 2011: 501; 2012: 167). Aromatics, including aromatic oils, were often part of royal tribute and are frequently mentioned in the annals. For example, Tiglath-Pileser III records that the people of Saba (Sheba in Arabia) brought "all types of aromatics" as tribute to Kalḫu after the capture of their queen, Samsi (Tadmor and Yamada 2011: 111). In fact, anointing with oil was an important requisite for all life-changing events, such as a birth, marriage, parenthood, social advancement, and, ultimately, death. Any change was potentially "dangerous," and protection was achieved by anointing with perfumed oil (Fappas 2011: 499).

It was not only the king and palace elite who were anointed; palace rooms would also be purified and perfumed (Thomason 2016: 248, 252), and Aššurnaṣirpal's new palace at Kalḫu would have been no exception. These were required, deliberately engineered, sensorial experiences that could be enjoyed by the royal court and palace visitors (Thomason 2016: 247). For example, the pungent smell of meat mixed with bread and beer would have permeated the inaugural banquet at Kalḫu, and those aromas would probably have mixed with the perfume from aromatic oils—scents that were also characteristic of Assyrian temple offerings (Neumann 2018: 197). The royal gardens would have been redolent with fragrances,

[8] Unfortunately, no trace of colour is visible on reliefs showing the proposed citron; however, on glazed tiles from Sargon II's palace at Khorsabad, genii hold bright yellow cone-shaped objects, which may signify that these were ripe citrons (see Place and Thomas 1867: pl. 14).

[9] In Mycenaean Pylos, an "unguent boiler" named Thyestes is mentioned (Day 2013: 5812).

Figure 5. Citrons; left, citron tree growing wild in Neot Kedumim nature reserve; a citron picked from the tree after soaking in water for 2 weeks. Note the Citron's engorged cells after soaking.

and these olfactory encounters would probably have lingered with visitors long after any banquet (Murphy 2013: 243–265).

As outlined above, the use of aromatic oils for purification was an essential ritual in royal households, and they were in demand despite their complex and time-consuming production. However, there was one aromatic oil that required no lengthy manufacturing process and no skilled perfumers and could be used immediately: the highly aromatic essential oil contained in the rind of a citron, and its appearance in the ancient Near East must have been revolutionary.

The Citron (*Citrus medica* L.)

The citron[10] is one of the three original citrus fruits, together with pomelo (*Citrus maxima*) and mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*), that originated in Southeast Asia in the foothills of the Himalayas. These three basic species are closely related to one another (Wang *et al.* 2017: 766) and are thought to have stemmed from a common *Citrus* ancestor approximately eight million years ago (Wu *et al.* 2018: 313). The citron is an evergreen tree that ranges in height from 3 to 5 m, living ca. 15 to 18 years (see Figure 5 left). Flowers and fruit appear on the same branch as the tree bears fruit throughout the year (Pagnoux 2017a: 153). Each citron fruit will contain a number of ovoid monoembryonic seeds, measuring between 0.5 and 1 cm (Panara and Nishteswar 2013: 391). The citron is one member of the *Citrus* genus that can clonally propagate via nucellar embryony[11]—that is, the citron can automatically self-pollinate even when the flower bud has not yet opened (Wu *et al.* 2018: 312). The resultant fruit is therefore identical to the mother tree, which has enabled the identification of different *Citrus* species after millennia (Calabrese 2002: 1).

The citron is also unique among the citrus family, as it is dry, having no juice vesicles (Panara and Nishteswar 2013: 392). The outer rind, known as the epicarp or

[10] *Citrus medica* L. is a member in the genus *Citrus* belonging to the Rutaceae or Rue family, subfamily Aurantioideae.

[11] Pollination from a nearby tree and self-pollination are natural processes, while grafting onto stock is relatively recent (Wu *et al.* 2018: 311).

flavedo, has a warty surface whose color can range from bright green to yellow. The internal part of the rind, known as the mesocarp, or albedo, is white and spongy in texture. Together they form the peel or pericarp of the fruit (Chaudhari, Ruknuddin, and Prajapati 2016: 561). The peel has a high concentration of flavonoids and is widely used in traditional medicine, especially in India and China (Bisht 2016: 237).

The Medicinal Properties of the Citron

The strong smell that typifies the citron emanates from the essential oil contained in the glands of the rind's surface. When this aromatic oil is released, it naturally purifies the air by destroying airborne bacterial and fungal diseases, as well as providing a pleasant sensorial experience.

The medical properties contained in the essential oil of the citron have been used for centuries in Ayurvedic medicine, where it is known as *bijapura*. Recent pharmacological studies[12] have authenticated its value as a multipurpose medicinal agent (Panara, Joshi, and Nishteswar 2012: 1292, 1295) with the potential to prevent or even reverse certain diseases (Chhikara *et al.* 2018: 1978). The rind, which represents the highest proportion of the fruit mass, contains a high concentration of flavonoids (Bisht 2016: 237), and 43 active constituents have been identified.[13] These are held in the essential oil and provide a broad spectrum of active agents that can combat many common bacterial diseases, which, in turn has led to the development of new clinically effective antibacterial compounds (Panara, Joshi, and Nishteswar 2012: 1293–1294).

Two of the oil's main constituents are limonene (as iso-limonene [39.37%] and limonene [21.78%]) and citral (23.12%). Limonene has been described as having a pronounced citrus smell that has a trace of pine (Buccellato 2002: 558). It has been used to heal various skin disorders by destroying the growth of fungus (specifically, *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus niger*); it is also antibacterial and can be used as a disinfectant. Citral[14] is a volatile compound with a strong lemon odour; it possesses antimicrobial properties that are effective against seven easily spread airborne bacteria (*Bacillus subtilis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Proteus vulgaris*) and is also effective as an insecticide (Chhikara *et al.* 2018: 1984–1986).

As the citron was traded west from the foothills of the Himalayas to Mesopotamia, its medicinal properties, recognized in Ayurveda, would most certainly have travelled with it. The Mesopotamian physicians were aware of contagion, which they recognized as "diseases of intercourse" (Scurlock 2004: 25); it is also very possible that they were aware of the citron's value as an effective agent against airborne diseases. Its efficacy to protect against epidemics and plagues was acknowledged in early pharmacopoeias, and it was advised that the fruit should be carried abroad and smelt for protection (Imbesi and De Pasquale 2002: 580–584). Even in the nineteenth century CE the smell of the citron was considered a prophylactic with such amazing health-giving properties that it could purportedly restore an invalid to life (Piesse 1857).

Extraction of the Citron's Essential Oil

The favoured oil extraction method is by manual squeezing, as this ensures a greater limonene content (Gabriele *et al.* 2009: 103). The glands that contain the essential oils measure between 0.4 and 0.6 mm in diameter and are surrounded by cells containing a colloidal solution rich in salts and sugars. This means that if the citron is immersed in water, the cells' higher osmotic pressure causes them to absorb water, and the resultant swelling places pressure on the oil glands so that they will rupture more easily, releasing their oil (Di Giacomo and Di Giacomo 2002: 115). The aroma of the now-freed oil is also enhanced by the water, which acts as a solvent on the oxygenated compounds, thus playing a vital role in the formation of the perfume (Di Giacomo and Di Giacomo 2002: 137) (see Figure 5, right).

The Citron Trade from India to the West

The citron's route from the foothills of the Himalayas to the Mediterranean Basin is shrouded in mystery, possibly due to the variety of different names the citron acquired on its journey westward. Today, the three most frequently used names are *citron* in English, *etrog* in Jewish ritual, and *bijapura* in Ayurvedic medicine.

The earliest known name for a citron is *jambila* in the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* part of the *Shukla Yajurveda*, a collection of Sanskrit devotional texts dating prior to 800 BCE (Tolkowsky 1938: 23). It is mentioned in the earliest corpus of Buddhist texts (ca. 400 BCE) as *mātuluṅga*, written in the early Indo-European language of Pali (Fuller *et al.* 2017: 37). In China, the *Tribute of Yu*, a text from 200 BCE that may originally date to 776–600 BCE, mentions that citrons were given in tribute to the emperor (Scora 1975: 369).

The citron is the perfect commodity to be traded over long distances due to its extremely thick peel, guaranteeing it a long shelf life. It appears to have been

[12] For the various pharmacological components and active ingredients of *Citrus medica* L., see Meena *et al.* 2011, Panara and Nishteswar 2013, Chhikara *et al.* 2018.
[13] For a comprehensive list, see al-Snafi 2016: 78–79.
[14] Citral occurs in nature as a mixture of two monoterpenoid isomers: geranial (citral A) and neral (citral B).

traded to the West quite early on, and archaeological evidence from Karnak, Nippur, and Cyprus may indicate that citrons were acquired by trade or received as gifts rather than grown locally (Langgut 2017a: 816). Trade routes, notably the Great Khorasan Road, provided a link between the East and ancient Mesopotamia. The route, or rather different branches of the route, existed as far back as the late Ubaid and Uruk periods (Muchesi 2015: 132). Exotic goods of all kinds, such as gold, lapis lazuli,[15] elephant ivory, and carnelian, were imported from Meluhha region in the Indus River Valley (Thomason 2017: 58–59).

Citron Cultivation in the West

As of the present day, there is no evidence for citron cultivation in Assyria during the ninth century BCE. Depictions of citron trees have not been identified on any reliefs, and there have been no studies revealing pollen or organic residues. Furthermore, the cold winters in Assyria would likely have proved too harsh, unless the citron trees were planted in pots and brought inside during this time. Indeed, a study of Neo-Assyrian gardens by Anastasia Amrhein has documented the existence of holes in the ground that she has suggested may have been used for such pots that could be moved indoors (2014: 96–97, fig. 4, nn. 41, 42, 44). In Roman-era Pompeii there is archaeological evidence for citrus trees having been grown in pots that could be moved. Documentation for the probable existence of early orangeries (*citreta*) is also provided by the fourth-century CE Latin author Palladiu s (3.24.14; see also Pagnoux *et al*. 2013: 436); while in Europe in the seventeenth century CE there were large, specially built orangeries that provided clement conditions, especially during the winter, to enable citrus cultivation.

The most reliable indicator for citron cultivation is the presence of pollen. Because the citron has the ability to self-pollinate, its pollen is rarely airborne. Therefore, if any pollen is detected, it is a clear sign that at least one citron tree grew in the immediate vicinity (Langgut 2015: 103; Langgut *et al*. 2013: 124). Unfortunately, palynological evidence is rare, and it is usually only organic remains that can furnish archaeobotanical support for citron cultivation. Organic residue from citrons has been identified in a sixth-century BCE wine jug from the Punic necropolis of Monte Sirai in Sardinia (Bouchaud *et al.* 2017: 51), which may signify local cultivation but not necessarily. However, pollen grains of *Citrus medica* L., embedded in the plaster coating of a Persian-period ornamental pool in the southern environs of Jerusalem, proved that the citron was cultivated in Judah during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Langgut *et al.* 2013: 123; Langgut 2015: 98, 102, 107–108). Pollen deposits from fourth-century BCE Carthage provide evidence for cultivation there (Bouchaud *et al.* 2017: 51). Mineralized seeds of *Citrus medica* L. were retrieved from Samnite levels below the Temple of Venus at Pompeii from the third and second centuries BCE (Pagnoux *et al.* 2013: 425). Frescoes on the walls of villas near Mount Vesuvius, dating between 20 BCE and 79 CE, depict cultivated citrus trees.[16] Such trees would have been a rarity, and their presence probably indicates that they were raised for medicinal purposes (De Carolis 2017: 105–106).

Unfortunately, Greek and Latin authors used a confusing variety of nonscientific names for the citron. Dioscorides called it *kedromelon* and *kitromelon,* synonyms of the Latin *kitrion* (*Mat. med.* 1.115.5.3), stating that "we name them Median or Persian apples, or *kedromela*, and Latin people name them *kitria.*" Phanias of Eresu s suggested that the name *kitrion* derived from the word for cedar *kedros*, as both trees had thorns (in Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 3.28.84C–D); however, there is no Greek word with the root *kitr-* ("cedar"), and it is more likely that the term "citrus" developed from the Latin name *cedrus*, possibly indicating that Latin authors were more familiar with citrus than the Greeks, thus signifying that the citron was probably known in Italy before Greece. Theophrastus called the citron the *melea persike* ("Persian apple") or the *melea medike* ("Median apple"), based on the citron's supposed origin[17] (*Caus. pl.* 1.11.4, 1.13.4, 4.4.2). While other Latin authors variously used the terms *citrium* and *malum citrium* (Pagnoux 2017b: 96), only Pliny the Elder referred to the citron as the *malus Assyria* ("Assyrian apple") (*HN* 15.14.47, 12.7.15–16).

In short, the citron was probably the only citrus fruit known for many years in Europe. Despite its multiplicity of names,[18] it is mentioned in various medical treatises that date between the fifth century BCE and sixteenth century CE (Álvarez Arias and Ramón-Laca 2005: 89).

[15] Lapis lazuli, which originated in Afghanistan, was often combined with carnelian, which originated in the Indian subcontinent. Lapis in particular had protective properties and was mentioned in Assyrian medicinal incantations (Winter 1999: 51).

[16] Their depiction is not clear: they may be lemon trees rather than citron trees; however, the citron appears to have preceded the arrival of the hybrid lemon.

[17] However, Theophrastus did not write of plant discoveries but of plants that had long been familiar to the Greek world. It is very probable that the citron was found in other areas and known by other names (Isaac 1959: 182–183). The citron was not the only fruit named for its supposed origin: the peach, which originally hailed from China, was called *malum persicum* ("Persian apple") and the pomegranate, which also had an origin in the Far East, was called *malum punicum* ("Punic apple").

[18] The confusion of names continued into modern times. The French name for citron is *cédrat*, the "fruit of the cedar." In German its name is *Zedratzitrone*, "cedar-citron," while in Italian there is just one name, *cedro*, for both the citron and the cedar (Tolkowsky 1938: 83).

Etrog: The Assyrian Connection

The Assyrian court continued to be based in Kalḫu as late as 710 BCE (Kertai 2015: 325), and Aššurnaṣirpal II's Northwest Palace built in the ninth century BCE was used by successive kings as a ceremonial palace to receive foreign emissaries.[19] They were received in the throne room complex, the entranceways of which were all decorated with genii holding the cone-shaped citron, the throne room had two near identical reliefs where genii held cone-shaped citrons over Aššurnaṣirpal's father and grandfather (Figure 6).[20] It is this repetitive decoration[21] that is very relevant to the study of visiting Judahite emissaries in the late eighth century BCE (Aster 2017: 64–65). Direct contact between Assyria and Judah began shortly after Tiglath-Pileser III 's accession to the throne, possibly as early as 738 BCE but definitely by 734 BCE (Aster 2015: 34–35; 2017: 64), when annual tribute was brought to Assyria (Aster 2017: 41-43).

In Isaiah 6 there is a description of winged attendants called Seraphim who have a purifying role (Aster 2017: 53). The Seraphim appear to resemble and play a role identical to that of the genii who held the cone-shaped object, the purifier (*mullilu)* (Aster 2015: 26–29; 2017: 61–64).[22] The Judean emissaries would have been awed by these larger-than-life genii who were symbols of Assyrian imperial ideology, and undoubtedly they brought back to Judah stories about what they had seen. They would have also brought back presents given them by the Assyrians (Aster 2015: 19–20, 22, 24; 2017: 45–47, 64–66).

It is quite feasible that a citron, with its easily extracted scented oil that possessed medicinal, anti-bacterial, and purifying properties would have been one of these gifts. The citron was easily transportable, and its thick oil-rich outer skin would have kept the citron fresh and sweet smelling. A very valuable gift: indeed, for just one citron can provide several seeds that can be germinated and become a tree that will produce its own citrons within three or four years. In fact, just one germinated seed was all that was required, as unopened flower buds on a single tree can self-pollinate and produce citrons[23]—thus giving rise to a whole orchard.

Figure 6. Two genii holding cone-shaped objects over the father and grandfather of Aššurnaṣirpal II on Throne room Relief B-23. On display British Museum. BM124531.

[19] In particular, during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III and the beginning of Sargon II's reign (Aster 2015: 19–21; 2017: 43, 64).

[20] For an identification of the two kings shown on the relief, see Brentjes 1994: 50–64.

[21] The combination of multiple images of cone-holding genii and stylized trees does not appear in any other Assyrian palace—it is unique to Aššurnaṣirpal II's palace.

[22] Shawn Aster concentrates on the reliefs in the throne room and the doorways leading to the throne room, but it is the adjacent ante-room F that has the most reliefs, repeatedly showing stylized trees and *apkallū* holding cone-shaped objects (Franklin 2021: 78, n. 6).

[23] In fact, for a citron to be ritually acceptable as an *etrog* at Succot it must be from a tree grown from a seed and not from a tree that had been grafted onto stock.

Figure 7. A variety of ripe Etrogs for sale, Succot market 2022.

When and Why the Citron Became Known as an Etrog

Based on the above analysis, citrons were brought back to Judah from Assyria (Figure 7). They may have been cultivated in Judah as early as the late First Temple period, although the earliest definite proof of cultivation in Judah dates to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Langgut 2013: 123; 2015: 98, 102, 107–108; 2017a: 814–815; 2017b: 86). The citron was new to the land, but its renown as a magical, purifying fruit was not. Its fame would have spread from its original homeland in the eastern foothills of the Himalayas to Assyria, and from Assyria to Persia, Judah, and eventually throughout the Mediterranean world.

According to Josephus (*Ant.*, 3.10.4, 3.13.5), by approximately 90 BCE the citron (*etrog*) was already an established part of the Succot ceremonial requirements: "the branch of myrtle, and willow, and a bough of the palm-tree, with the addition of the pome citron." However, the festival of Succot and the importance of the four species was only established in its present form at some point after the return from Babylon (Moster 2018: 97). The inclusion of the citron (*etrog*), an acknowledged foreign fruit, is often based on its identification with the term *hadar* in Leviticus 23:40. However, there is no linguistic proof for such a connection, and a comprehensive argument against this identification has been provided by David Moster (2018: 74–102).[24]

Conclusion

Thanks to the phytochemical constituents of the citron with its wide range of well-documented medicinal qualities, both ancient and modern, it has been utilized for thousands of years, particularly in the Far East. Despite the absence of citron trees on the Assyrian reliefs, there are very valid pharmacological reasons to support the identification of the cone-shaped object held by the genii as a citron. Furthermore, the genii grasp the cone-shaped object or, more correctly, the citron as if they are squeezing it, imitating the way that the citron's purifying oil is released. Those stone-carved citrons in Aššurnaṣirpal's Northwest Palace may not have perfumed and purified the air but would have had apotropaic powers that could ward off a host of unseen, but very real, evils—thus protecting the king and his palace.

The stone-carved citrons formed part of the awe-inspiring Assyrian visual propaganda that was seen by the Judean emissaries, while real citrons, possibly given as gifts, probably arrived in Judah around 700 BCE At some unknown date, but no later than the fifth century BCE, citron trees were blooming in the garden of Ramat Rahel near Jerusalem. Eventually the citron (*etrog*) became an important part of the Succot festival, and paired with the native myrtle, willow, and palm frond, to form a *lulav*. The citron must have been a

[24] The Samaritan community does not equate the citron with the term *hadar* in Leviticus 23:40 and it does not have a special status in their Succot service.

prized, precious fruit, to have been incorporated by the Judeans into their religious ritual. Did they know about its amazing health-giving properties, or was it simply a sweet-smelling fruit with a long shelf-life?

In short, the citron is a potent purifying agent and as originally proposed by Bonavia; it should be identified with the Assyrian *mullilu*.

Appendix: The Citron, the Cedar Cone, and the Bucket

The cone-shaped object held by many of the genii (see Figures 1, 3 and 6), as mentioned above, has often been identified as a fir cone, specifically the cone of the cedar tree (Figure 4). In addition to the cone-shaped object the genii will always carry a bucket, and the two objects are presumed to have had a symbiotic function. It has been suggested that the cone-shaped object was used to flick purifying water, held in the bucket. However, a simple practical experiment disproves the use of a cedar cone. A cedar cone placed in water will quickly become moldy, while a citron placed in water will remain fresh and sweet smelling for some weeks without a change of water. A cedar cone kept dry will quickly change from pale grayish green to dark brown, and its cone-shape will change as it dries and opens up (Figure 4). A citron kept dry will keep fresh and firm, maintaining its shape and fragrance for months, as it slowly changes from green to a light yellow, before becoming hardened.[25] The citron maintains its succulence long after it is harvested. However, unlike precious stones that endure the ravages of time, the citron does not.

[25] Fresh cedar cones were collected from the Himalayan Deodar Cedar trees in Manali, India. Fresh citrons were provided by Neot Kedumin Park, Israel.

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Chapter 6:
The reception of the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in Spain: From a treatise on ophthalmology to a white plaster cast[1]

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Abstract. In this paper I bring together some examples of the enthusiastic reception of the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in Spain to show that certain sectors of society (outside academia as well as inside) showed considerable interest in the stele and that, as a result, Mesopotamia began to take its place in the imaginary of an Antiquity hitherto populated, basically, by Greek and Roman material culture and written sources. The paper is structured in two parts. The first offers an overview of the references to the stele in the Spanish press, paying special attention to the first years after its rediscovery in 1901–1902. In the second part, I concentrate on another means of reception, focusing on a rather unusual artefact: the plaster cast of the stele bought in 1935 by the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao in northern Spain, from the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

Keywords: Law Code stele of Hammurabi, reception studies, Spain, print media, plaster casts, Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao, Musée du Louvre, Rodolfo del Castillo y Quartiellers.

The geologist and archaeologist Jean-Jacques de Morgan (1857–1924) was the director of the archaeological campaign of the winter 1901–1902 at the acropolis of Susa, in the south-west of present-day Iran, which unearthed the Law Code stele of Hammurabi. The stele had reached Susa as Elamite war booty in the twelfth century BCE;[2] its original location when it was made, in the eighteenth century BCE, was quite possibly Sippar or Babylon, in the south of present-day Iraq.[3] Today, this basalt stele is one of the stellar exhibits of the ancient Near Eastern collection of the Musée du Louvre (inventory number: SB 8).[4] As such, since the beginning of the twentieth century it has received continued attention both inside academia and outside. Proof of its success in the broader world is its widespread presence in the internet. In an article published in 2005, Victor Hurowitz reported 91,000 hits for "Hammurabi" in the Google browser (Hurowitz 2005: 499). In 2022, the same search yielded 6,780,000 hits, and the search for "Hammurabi code" over two million. The numbers speak for themselves! Inside academia, one of the most recent articles by Tallay Ornan, provocatively (and cleverly) titled *Unfinished business: The relief on the Hammurabi Louvre stele revisited* bears witness to the continuous presence of Hammurabi, and more specifically of his stele (Ornan 2019). In the present paper, as a tribute to Prof. Ornan's research and career, I also focus on the Law Code stele of Hammurabi, the centrepiece of her 2019 article, and offer some insights into the reception of this piece in Spain between 1903 and 1936.

The paper is structured in two parts. First, I present an overview of the references to the piece in Spanish press, paying special attention to the first years after its rediscovery. This will show that, even in a country like Spain with no tradition in ancient Near Eastern studies, the stele caused an impact in both academia and the general public. Second, I concentrate on another means of reception, exploring the story of an unusual specimen: the plaster cast of the stele bought in 1935 by the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao, in northern Spain, from the Musée du Louvre in Paris. Unlike other copies of the piece, which strive to resemble the original as much as possible, this plaster cast is white rather than dark like the original. Through a review of plaster cast catalogues of the Louvre and the analysis of unpublished archival materials of the Bilbao museum, I will outline the process through which this plaster cast was commissioned and suggest some clues to understand the unusual decision regarding its colour.

[1] This paper was written as part of the research project PID2020-114676GB-I00, awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation during a "Ramón y Cajal" contract (RYC2019–027460–I) granted by the same institution. I would like to thank Itziar Martija for her warm welcome at the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao and for her generosity in allowing me to consult its archive and to access the part of the collection not currently open to the public, and also to check databases and unpublished publications preserved in the museum's library. I would also like to thank Pau Canyameres and Cristina Simonetti for their bibliographical advice regarding the Museu de Montserrat (Canyameres) and on the first translations and studies into Italian of the text of the Law Code of Hammurabi (Simonetti).

[2] On this issue, with special attention to the alterations the piece suffered once in Elam, see Michel 2020: 34.

[3] See Ornan 2019: 87–88. See this study also for a very full summary of the different hypotheses about the stone of the stele, and the history of its discovery, publication and diffusion, with a wealth of previous references.

[4] A description of the piece, with pictures and a summary of data, including bibliographical references, can be consulted on-line <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010174436> [accessed June 2022]. On the recent changes in the context of its display, see Thomas 2018: 51.

The Law Code stele of Hammurabi in the Spanish press

The period spanning the 1880s until the beginning of the Spanish Civil war (1936–1939) is considered a golden age for the press, both in terms of the proliferation of print media and for the freedom that the press enjoyed. This truism also applies to Spain, above all in cities such as Madrid and Barcelona. Taking this into account, the publications chosen for this study were all issued between the 1870s and the 1930s (in one case, until 1941); their activity was brought to a close by the civil war, which radically and tragically changed the rules of the game. In what follows I present examples of references to the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in six publications: the four newspapers *El Liberal*, *El Siglo Futuro*, *Heraldo de Madrid*, and *La Vanguardia*, the illustrated weekly *Alrededor del Mundo*, and the cultural magazine *La España Moderna*.[5]

The morning newspaper *El Liberal* was founded in Madrid in 1879, and soon opened editions in other cities such as Seville and Bilbao. The Madrid edition of 5 March 1903 carried a sarcastic column by an unknown author entitled "Rómulo y Hammurabi." It is striking to think that, little more than one year after the stele was unearthed in Iran, a Spanish mainstream newspaper should publish a report of this kind in which the Mesopotamian Hammurabi, precisely because of the recent rediscovery of the stele, was placed alongside the already well-known Roman Romulus, to express the unease caused by the fact that the positivism on which the conception of history was based appeared to be under threat. Furthermore, the discomfort was provoked by archaeology, a new academic discipline taking shape at that time and raising questions about the methodology and the sources with history, at that time already a well-established branch of study.[6] This discomfort, channelled by the Hammurabi case study, was expressed in the following terms in *El Liberal:*[7]

> "Compadezcamos á nuestros hijos, y al paso que van las cosas, un poco más á nuestros nietos. Falsas ó verdaderas, teníamos ciertas nociones de Historia, con las cuales íbamos tirando. [...] Los arqueólogos vienen ahora á destruir nuestras ilusiones: la Historia, la verdadera Historia, no está en los estantes de las bibliotecas; se halla, como los minerales, en el subsuelo. De modo, que es preciso rehacer la que conocemos, no sólo por lo que en ella falta, sino que también por los errores que contiene.
>
> Como ejemplo de las omisiones ahí está el famoso Hammurabi, que reinó en Babilonia 2340 años antes de la Era cristiana, y que á creer al emperador Guillermo, el cual acaba de hacerle un gran reclamo, era amigo de Abraham. ¡Cualquiera se lo va a preguntar! Lo que parece cierto es que era un rey hidráulico, que diríamos ahora, puesto que canalizó el Eufrates, é hizo ejecutar grandes trabajos de irrigación, utilizando las aguas del famoso río. [...]
>
> Dígase, en vista de lo expuesto, si es menudo el trabajo que les ha caído á nuestros descendientes si han de aprender la Historia con las añadiduras y rectificaciones que están cayendo."[8]

From these words it follows that archaeological campaigns and their "new" findings were not always well received at the beginning of the twentieth century: they could also cause annoyance and disbelief, at least in certain sectors of society. However, for the most part the Spanish press spoke enthusiastically of the discoveries. A good example is the inclusion of a review of one of the first studies devoted to the text of the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in the cultural magazine *La España Moderna* (published from 1889 to 1941). Its July 1903 issue contained a review by P. Dorado [9] of *Il diritto criminale nella più antica legge conosciuta. Disposizioni del Codice babilonese di Hammurabi (2250 circa av.C)*, a monograph published that same year by the Italian lawyer Vincenzo Manzini (1872–1957).[10] The fact that this cultural magazine included a review of a study, in

[5] For an overview of the Spanish press during these decades, with specific references to the publications mentioned and some remarks on this golden age, see Pizarroso 2010.

[6] For some of these debates, with a reflection on the link between archaeologists and antiquarians in the shaping of archaeology as an academic discipline distinct from history, see Schnapp 2002, especially pp. 135–136.

[7] Here I only quote some excerpts of the writings, or just their title. Readers interested in consulting the complete writings should visit the open on-line database of the Biblioteca Nacional de España: <http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/> [accessed June 2022]. Besides, notice that for all excerpts I include, in a footnote, an own translation into English.

[8] "We should feel sorry for our children, and even more sorry for our grandchildren. We used to have certain notions of history, true or false, with which we got by. [...] Archaeologists have now come to destroy our illusions: History, true History, is not on the library shelves; it is found in the subsoil – like minerals. So, it is necessary to remake the history we know, not just because of what is missing in it, but also because of the errors it contains.
An example of these omissions is the famous Hammurabi, who reigned in Babylon 2,340 years before the Christian Era, and who, Emperor William has just claimed, was a friend of Abraham. As if anyone will ask! What seems certain is that he was a hydraulic king, as we would say now, since he channelled the Euphrates and had great irrigation works carried out using the waters of the famous river. [...]
What a huge task has befallen our descendants if they have to learn History with all the additions and rectifications that are now emerging."

[9] So far I have been unable to identify P. Dorado. Unfortunately, I cannot provide either his full name, or his dates of birth and death, or any other data that would help to contextualize his article.

[10] However, it would be necessary to wait a few more years to have the first complete translation of the Code of Hammurabi into Italian, which was the one published by Pietro Bonfante in 1926. This was, however, an indirect translation, as Bonfante knew no Akkadian. For a selection of the main translations and editions of the text of the stele, including the one by Bonfante, see Simonetti 2020: 1437, footnote 2.

a foreign language, of a topic as specialised as this one, bears witness to the interest that the stele aroused in Spain. And in the very first paragraph of the review Dorado explained why the stele was so important, referring to the archaeological campaign led by Morgan (albeit with a small typographical error in the French geologist's initials):

> "En las excavaciones hechas en Susa por la misión francesa dirigida por M. J. Morgan, se ha descubierto hace pocos años, entre otras cosas, una estela donde está representado el rey Hammurábi, fundador de un nuevo Estado, en el acto de recibir de manos del dios del Sol de Sippar las reglas con las cuales ha de regir á su pueblo. Estas reglas están escritas con caracteres cuneiformes en ambos lados de la estela; y descifradas y traducidas por los asiriólogos, constituyen, al decir de los entendidos en la materia, el más antiguo de los códigos hasta hoy conocidos, supuesto que su antigüedad se remonta hacia el año 2250 antes de Cristo, ó sea medio siglo antes de la más vieja ley penal china de que hay memoria; cuando menos, quinientos años antes de la legislación del Sinaí; mil, antes del origen más remoto que se atribuye al Mánava-Dharma-Sástra de Manú, y muchísimo tiempo antes de las constituciones griegas de Zalenco, Corondas, Dracón, etc."[11] (Dorado 1903: 202).

A similar piece was published in the illustrated weekly *Alrededor del Mundo* only a few weeks later, on 20 August 1903, which reiterated the belief held at the time that the stele was the oldest known compendium of laws. This was indeed acknowledged at the beginning of the two-page piece by an unknown author, eloquently entitled "La ley más antigua del mundo y el fundador de Babilonia":

> "Hasta el reinado de Hammurabi, unos dos mil doscientos cincuenta años antes de Cristo, no sabemos nada de Babilonia como ciudad. [...] La civilización le debe el primer Código conocido. Por primera vez, que se sepa, en la historia de la, humanidad, reunió y formuló en un Código las decisiones de los tribunales civiles, que habían acabado por constituir una especie de derecho consuetudinario. Este Código completo, el monumento más perfecto que hasta ahora se ha descubierto de la civilización primitiva, lo mandó grabar en una gran piedra, y envió copias de él, también en piedra, á las principales ciudades de sus dominios, para que pudiera ser leído por todos sus súbditos."[12] ("La ley más antigua del mundo y el fundador de Babilonia" 1903: 122).

It is noticeable that in both these excerpts the authors show some caution regarding the status of the text as the earliest known law code. Both state that this was the situation as they understood it at that time ("el más antiguo de los códigos hasta hoy conocidos" / "Por primera vez, que se sepa, en la historia"),[13] recognizing that knowledge of the past was always temporary and subject to change – a notion to which the author of the column "Rómulo y Hammurabi", in *El Liberal*, did not subscribe.

Interestingly, a few months later the cultural magazine *La España Moderna* devoted some more space to the Law Code stele of Hammurabi. In December 1904 it published a detailed paper by the lawyer and historian Eduardo de Hinojosa y Naveros (1852–1919) titled "El Código de Hammurabi." De Hinojosa states in the first footnote that, before writing the paper, he had consulted the two translations of the Code of Hammurabi into modern languages available at that time: the one by Jean-Vincent Scheil (1858–1949) into French, dating from 1902, which was the *editio princeps*, and the one by Hugo Winckler (1863–1913) into German, dating from 1904. So the author's desire for methodological rigour is clear. Although he had no specific training in Assyriology, De Hinojosa also showed himself to be abreast of the recent debates and publications in this discipline.

Also in 1904, the daily newspaper *Heraldo de Madrid* (published between 1890 and 1939) included a surprising note in the section "Noticias generales" ("general news"). This column usually reported events such as bullfights, the shortcomings in the rail services, and advertisements for products as wide-ranging as flower crowns or remedies for rheumatism. But on this occasion it included the following news item:

[11] "In the excavations carried out at Susa by the French mission led by M. J. Morgan, a few years ago, a stele was discovered in which King Hammurabi, the founder of a new state, is represented in the act of receiving the rules by which he is to govern his people, from the hands of the god of the sun of Sippar. These rules are written in cuneiform characters on both sides of the stele; deciphered and translated by Assyriologists, they constitute, according to experts in the matter, the oldest legal code known until now, dating back to the year 2250 before Christ: that is, half a century before the oldest Chinese criminal law in living memory; at least five hundred years before the legislation on Mt. Sinai; a thousand years before the most remote origin that is attributed to the Manava-Dharma-Shastra of Manu, and a very long time before the Greek constitutions of Zeleucus, Charondas, Draco, and so on."

[12] "Until the reign of Hammurabi, some 2250 years before Christ, we know nothing of Babylon as a city. [...] To him civilization owes its first known Legal Code. For the first time known in the history of humanity, he brought together the decisions of the civil courts and formulated a Code, which eventually came to constitute a kind of customary law. He decreed that his complete Code, the most perfect monument to primitive civilization that has been discovered so far, should be engraved on a great stone, and he sent copies of it, also in stone, to the main cities of his dominions, so that it could be read by all his subjects."

[13] "The oldest of the codes known until now"/ "For the first time known in the history of humanity."

> "Una nueva monografía viene á aumentar el guarismo de las que lleva publicadas el reputado oculista del Instituto Quirúrgico del Doctor Rubio, doctor Rodolfo del Castillo Quartiellers. Trátase del Código del Rey Hammurabi, descubierto recientemente en las excavaciones hechas en Susa (Asia), quo tiene unos 4.000 años, del cual el doctor Castillo Quartiellers ha hecho un prolijo estudio, deduciendo con acierto que en aquellos tiempos las enfermedades de los ojos eran tratadas por especialistas. Titula el trabajo *El Código de Hammurabi y la Oftalmología en los tiempos babilónicos*. El doctor Castillo, al demostrar su cultura y erudición, da á su trabajo amenidad é interés, y prepara al lector sin molestia alguna ni cansancio para llevarle á su objeto, que es la importancia que la Oculística tenía en aquellos remotos tiempos, y al recomendar su lectura lo hacemos por la utilidad y enseñanza que proporciona al lector."[14] ("Noticias generales" 1904: 3).

Rodolfo del Castillo y Quartiellers (1845–1917) was an ophthalmologist from Cádiz, in southern Spain. He devoted his professional life not just to the practice and teaching of ophthalmology, but also to historical research into this subject.[15] His contribution, echoed by a general newspaper of the time, is notable for several reasons. On the one hand, his study was published only two years after the Law Code stele of Hammurabi had been rediscovered. Even though we have seen several examples of the rapid spread of the news in Spain, it is worth recalling that the existence of the Law Code was not common knowledge, and obviously next to nothing was known of its contents. On the other hand, those who knew of the stele were interested above all its importance for the history of law. Therefore, seeing it a potential source for the study of ophthalmology was an unusual twist in the story; one would have expected a piece on the issue from an Assyriologist rather than from an ophthalmologist.[16] For all these reasons, Castillo's research is particularly creditable; along with the story in the *Heraldo de Madrid*, it helped to spread the news about the Law Code stele of Hammurabi and its contents.

Interestingly, of the 17 pages of Castillo's study, 11 are devoted to a description of the stele, its content, its total or partial translations into modern languages (French, German, English and Italian, at that time), and only six pages centre on ophthalmology and medical practice. In these last pages, Castillo offers his point of view as a medical expert, accompanied by the translation into Spanish of the laws that were relevant to his purpose. He knew no Akkadian, and he himself recognized his lack of preparation to offer direct translations from this language into Spanish (Castillo 1904: 10). For this reason, he took as his starting point the translation into Italian by Francesco Mari (1873–1934), published in 1903 as *Il Codice di Hammurabi e la Bibbia*, to prepare his own translations into Spanish (Castillo 1904: 11, 15).[17] Moreover, it seems that Castillo (1904: 15) also sought the advice of a local expert in ancient languages, the epigraphist and historian Fidel Fita (1835–1918), who in all probability was the man who introduced him to the stele, even though he was not himself an Assyriologist.

So far we have seen several examples of echoes of the reception of the stele of Hammurabi's Law Code in the Spanish press in 1903 and 1904, the years immediately following its rediscovery and its transfer to the Musée du Louvre in 1902. To close this section I would like to describe a couple of developments in the following years to show that the interest generated by the stele in Spain by no means diminished with the passing of time. A good example of this is the considerable space given over by Max-Luis Aldrey Pereira (1894–1963) in his brief obituary of the theologian and philosopher Ángel Amor Ruibal (1869–1930), to Amor Ruibal's contribution to the study of the stele. In this obituary, published in *El Siglo Futuro* on 20 November, 1930, Aldrey Pereira referred to this study in these terms:

> "Otro acierto más del señor Amor Ruibal y un favor más que ha hecho a las letras patrias y a las naciones de lengua española, divulgando y comentando esta legislación antiquísima del Gran Rey de la primera dinastía babilónica años 2123–2081 a. C."[18]

[14] "A new monograph has appeared to add to the number published by the renowned ophthalmologist Doctor Rodolfo del Castillo Quartiellers, of the Doctor Rubio Surgical Institute. It is the Code of King Hammurabi, recently discovered in the excavations made in Susa (Asia), which is around 4,000 years old. Dr Castillo Quartiellers has made a lengthy study, correctly deducing that in those times eye diseases were treated by specialists. He has given his study the title *The Code of Hammurabi and Ophthalmology in Babylonian Times*. Dr Castillo demonstrates his culture and erudition in this very readable and interesting work, and prepares the reader without any tiresomeness or fatigue for his object; namely, to stress the importance of ophthalmology in those remote times. We recommend this work for its usefulness and the teaching it provides to the reader."

[15] For an overview of Castillo's biography and professional profile, and for an analysis of his contributions to the historical research on ophthalmology, see Herrera 2013.

[16] The study of cuneiform medicine has expanded notably in recent decades. As an example of this research, in this case centred on texts dealing with eye diseases see, with previous references, Geller and Panayotov 2020.

[17] Though not a direct translation, this was, most probably, the first one available to Spanish readers of some of the laws of Hammurabi. For a complete updated translation of the stele into Spanish, direct from Akkadian, see Sanmartín 1999 (§3 below). About the translations into modern languages, particularly into Italian, of the text of the stele, see also footnote 10, above.

[18] "Another fine achievement of Mr. Amor Ruibal and another service that he has rendered to the country's literature and to the Spanish-speaking nations, disseminating and commenting on this ancient legislation of the Great King of the first Babylonian dynasty, between 2123 and 2081 BCE."

However, it has been questioned whether he actually finished this research.[19]

A second example of this ongoing interest in the stele is the publicity made for lectures in which it was discussed. For instance, the lawyer Rafael Gay de Montellá (1882–1969), gave a lecture entitled "El Dret Mercantil Marítim Modern" at the Law Faculty of the University of Barcelona in May 1935. A report on the lecture was published by the Catalan newspaper *La Vanguardia*, in the section of news linked to the sea and air ("Marítimas y aéreas") dated 21 May, 1935. With regard to the historical background described by the speaker, the report states the following:

> "El conferenciante describe la monumentalidad del Derecho Marítimo en general comparándolo a una enorme construcción catedralicia de los siglos medievales. En lo profundo de los cimientos encuéntrense las antiquísimas leyes de los pueblos caldeos, asirios y egipcios (leyes de Hammurabi), de las civilizaciones minoica y cretense, fenicias y heleno-cartaginesas."[20]
>
> ("Conferencia de divulgación marítima" 1935: 20).

The reception of the stele of Hammurabi through plaster casts: the unusual specimen at the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao

In the previous section I offered some examples of the reception of the stele of Hammurabi's Law Code in the Spanish press. They show that, although the existence of the stele and its content were not common knowledge, it nevertheless aroused genuine interest, at least in certain circles. Indeed, the circulation of information regarding the stele was not restricted to the initial period after its discovery, but continued over the course of the subsequent decades. This is the backdrop to the decision taken by the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao to commission a plaster cast of the stele in the 1930s, when the museum was still building up its collection with the first acquisitions. In what follows I present some details about this plaster cast and its acquisition.

The Board of Trustees of the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao, a project launched by the upper-middle classes of this industrial city in northern Spain, was constituted in 1927. In the following years, especially between 1930 and 1936, the museum acquired the plaster casts that would form the core of its collection, among them eleven copies of sculptures and reliefs of pieces from ancient Mesopotamia.[21] One of these eleven pieces was a plaster cast of the stele of Hammurabi's Law Code (inventory number: MRB 156; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Plaster cast of the Hammurabi stele at the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao (Inventory number: MRB 156). Picture courtesy of the Museo.

[19] For a brief description of Aldrey Pereira, with reference to his link to Amor Ruibal, also with previous references to the question of Amor Ruibal's dubious contribution to the study of the Law Code, see Vidal 2017–2018: 154. See also Vidal 2013: 17–20 for the academic careers of both Aldrey Pereira and Amor Ruibal and their publications linked to ancient Near Eastern studies.

[20] "The lecturer describes the monumentality of Maritime Law in general by comparing it to a huge cathedral construction from medieval times. Deep in its foundations are the ancient laws of the Chaldean, Assyrian and Egyptian peoples (the laws of Hammurabi), and of the Minoan and Cretan, Phoenician and Hellenic-Carthaginian civilizations."

[21] On the launch of this museum in its social and cultural context, with previous references, as well as for a catalogue of its collection of casts of ancient Near Eastern pieces, see Garcia-Ventura 2022.

From the very beginning this piece was considered one of the finest in the collection. In the general overview of the Bilbao museum in the 1955 edition of the volume *Historia y guía de los museos de España*, from the roughly 200 pieces in its collection, 29 were singled out as especially noteworthy, among them three plaster casts from the ancient Near Easter section: the stele of Hammurabi, a sculpture of Gudea, and the Assyrian relief from Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, known as the "wounded lioness" (Gaya Nuño 1955: 171).[22] Also underlining the relevance of the piece is the fact that it is one of exhibits from the Mesopotamian collection that were highlighted in a museum inspection report dated 30 July, 1966, which noted that the Bilbao museum owned "outstanding examples of Assyrian, Chaldean, Babylonian and Egyptian art, such as the Code of Hammurabi."[23]

As noted above, the stele of Hammurabi's Law Code was part of the collection of the Musée du Louvre. For this reason, it was the museum's plaster cast workshop that produced and sold the casts of this piece, which had been one of its most popular items since its inclusion in the sales catalogues at the beginning of the twentieth century.[24] So when the Bilbao museum decided to commission a plaster cast of the stele, it had to contact the Musée du Louvre. This is still true today, in 2022: anyone wishing to order a copy of the stele has to contact the Ateliers d'Art des Musées Nationaux, the successor of the former Louvre casting workshop.[25]

In those days, the first step in ordering a plaster cast was usually to consult the sales catalogue to check availability and price. The catalogue accessed by those responsible for acquisitions in Bilbao would have been the 1932 edition, entitled *Catalogue des moulages en vente au Musée de Sculpture Comparée* (Lefèvre and Angoulvent 1932). The Hammurabi stele was number 20 in this catalogue, and its plaster cast was offered in two forms: raw or patinated. The former was cheaper (1500 francs), while the latter, with a finer finish, cost 1950 francs. For most reliefs and sculptures, already white or light-coloured, the difference between the two forms was merely one of fineness; in the case of the Hammurabi stele, however, the choice was more significant, as the original stele was made of dark basalt.[26] As raw plaster was white, the only way to obtain a more faithful copy of the original was to order the patinated plaster. However, this was not the option chosen by the Bilbao museum.

The Bilbao museum was committed to obtaining the most faithful copies of the pieces possible, and required that the dimensions had to be the same as those of the original. Reductions were commonly produced as plaster casts and were obviously, cheaper, but one of the documents related to the order of this and other pieces from the Louvre, dated 10 January 1935 (AMRB 232/005/002) bears witness to the museum's insistence on this point, as do other reports of the meetings of the board of trustees like the one dated 30 November 1931, which states that "the works must always be of natural size".[27]

Budget constraints were also a factor. While size was always a priority, maybe colour was not, especially bearing in mind that most of the original pieces were actually light-coloured. It is possible that the museum management did not notice this detail when they made the order of the plaster cast with raw plaster, and in any case it is unlikely that any of the trustees had seen the stele in Paris. Besides, the sales plaster cast catalogues did not include pictures of the stele. And even if there had been a picture, it would have been of little help: those that were included in the catalogue were in black and white and therefore gave no idea of the colour of the original pieces.

Specifically with regard to the price, 1550 francs was already a large sum for a plaster cast in 1935. Prices in general had risen considerably in a few years, and the price of plaster casts was no exception. A quick check of the copy sales catalogues of the Louvre confirms this: the first catalogue that included a plaster cast of the Hammurabi stele, the 1910 edition entitled *Catalogue des moulages en vente au Palais du Louvre. Antiquité (Édition provisoire)* (Louvre 1910), set a price of 180 francs.[28] Nothing was specified about the type of plaster used; bearing in mind the usual intention to emulate the original as closely as possible, we can assume that it was patinated. The next sales catalogue in which the piece was included was the one issued in 1925, entitled *Catalogue illustré des moulages des ateliers du Louvre. Sculptures de l'antiquité, du moyen age, de la renaissance et des temps modernes* (Louvre 1925). In this one the price of the plaster cast, most probably offered only

[22] On the plaster casts of the "wounded lioness" in Spain, including the one at the Bilbao museum, see Garcia-Ventura 2023.

[23] AMRB 254/001/001: "notables muestras del arte asirio, caldeo, babilónico y egipcio, como el Código de Hammurabi." Documents from the archive are referred by the acronym AMRB (= Archivo del Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao).

[24] For a thorough study of the plaster cast workshop of the Musée du Louvre, see Rionnet 1994 and 1996. For the incorporation of ancient Near Eastern pieces into the sales catalogue of the workshop and its success, including the Law Code stele of Hammurabi, see especially Rionnet 1996: 11–13.

[25] https://ateliersartmuseesnationaux.fr/fr/sculptures/PA001013 [accessed June 2022]. The minimum price, in this case, is 4850 euros, most probably for the copy delivered in raw plaster.

[26] Ornan (2019: 86–87) presents an overview of the customary identification of the material of the stele as diorite, but states that recent research has confirmed that the raw material was basalt.

[27] AMRB 234/002/013: "las obras han de ser siempre de tamaño natural."

[28] The stele was number 1516 in the catalogue and appeared on page 7.

in patinated plaster, was 400 francs (p. 18). Only seven years later, in the 1932 catalogue (the one consulted by the Bilbao museum) the price of the patinated plaster cast of the stele had risen to 1950 francs. This was the first catalogue also to offer raw plaster, a cheaper alternative to patinated plaster.

This huge increase in prices was due to the inflation after the 1929 crash, but it was not a new phenomenon. Previously, the First World War (1914–1918) had had an impact on prices in general and on those of plaster casts in particular (Rionnet 1996: 78–79). At that time the sales of plaster casts were falling, but the costs of keeping the workshops active remained the same. If we add to this the increase in the prices of raw materials for the reasons mentioned above, we have the perfect storm that explains the rise in the prices of the casts of the stele. This exceptional situation might have led the Louvre to offer two forms of plaster casts, raw and patinated, to be able to offer a cheaper option to its customers. And it was precisely at this point that the Bilbao museum ordered a plaster cast of the stele, choosing the raw plaster piece – that is, the cheaper option.

The upshot of this choice is that the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao owns a very unusual specimen, especially in the Spanish context. As far as I know, there are only two plaster casts of the Hammurabi stele in Spanish museums. The other one, also commissioned from the Louvre workshop, is preserved and exhibited at the Museu de Montserrat in Catalonia (Márquez Rowe 2015: catalogue number 42, p. 111). It is part of the set of 17 plaster casts of ancient Near Eastern pieces ordered by Bonaventura Ubach (1879–1960), the driving force behind the project of the Museu de Montserrat, in the 1920s.[29] As we have seen, the dates here are significant: ordering a cast was far cheaper in the 1920s than in the 1930s. The plaster cast of the stele at Montserrat is dark coloured and, taking into account the information summarized above, it would have cost, at that time, 400 francs[30] – a much lower price than the one paid by the Museo de Reproducciones de Bilbao.

Let's move on now to the logistics of the ordering of the plaster cast, a process that we can trace thanks to the archival documents preserved at the Bilbao museum. In 1932 and 1933, the museum sent several letters to the Louvre asking for their plaster cast catalogues. This insistence is due to the fact that the letters did not actually reach the addressee. In a typewritten letter dated 13 November 1933, sent from the department of commercial services of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux, the reasons for this situation were explained in the following terms:

> "Nous ne nous expliquons pas qu'aucune des lettres que vous nous avez écrites dans ces derniers mois ne nous soient parvenues: nous pensons que la cause doit en être cherchée dans le fait que vous adressez vos lettres à 'Musée du Louvre' ou 'Museo del Louvre', au lieu de les envoyer à l'adresse: 'Monsieur le Chef des Services Techniques et Commerciaux des Musées Nationaux, Palais du Louvre, Paris Ier'. Pour éviter tout malentendu ultérieur entre nous, voulez-vous avoir l'amabilité de noter très exactement cette adresse et d'envoyer toutes vos lettres au dit service."[31] (AMRB 232/005/005).

This letter reached the right addressee, because it seems that the head of the plaster cast workshop received an order from someone who was not named but was referred to in the letter as an intermediary between the Bilbao museum and the Louvre.[32] The "Monsieur le Chef des Services Techniques et Commerciaux des Musées Nationaux," to whom the Bilbao museum was asked to send the letters from that moment onwards, was Albert Morancé (1874–1951), at that time also head of the plaster cast workshop (Rionnet 1996: 57). Judging by the archival documents it seems that these instructions for correspondence were followed, and the now smooth communication would eventually lead to the commissioning of the plaster cast of the stele of Hammurabi, among other pieces. However, this did not happen immediately.

[29] On this order of 17 plaster casts, with a special mention of the stele of Hammurabi, see Valdés Pereiro 2001: 165 (with previous references). On Ubach and his role in the launch of the Museu de Montserrat, see also Díaz Carbonell 2015 and Canyameres 2022: 8–14. For a brief biographical profile of Ubach, with further references, see Vidal 2013: 113–114.

[30] We cannot confirm the exact date of purchase of the plaster cast, although it seems clear it was in the 1920s. In her study of the early history of the museum, Valdés Pereiro (2001: 165) mentions June 1922 as the date when Ubach visited the Louvre and ordered this plaster cast, together with other pieces. However, in the recently published catalogue of the Mesopotamian collection at Montserrat, Márquez Rowe (2015: 111), states that it was purchased by Ubach in 1924. To clarify this detail, as well as to confirm the price of the cast, further research with archival documents is needed. At the time this article was written, research into this topic was being carried out by Pau Canyameres, who intends to publish the results in the near future.

[31] "We cannot explain why none of the letters you have written to us in recent months have reached us: we believe that the cause must be sought in the fact that you addressed your letters to 'Musée du Louvre' or 'Museo del Louvre', instead of sending them to the address: 'Monsieur le Chef des Services Techniques et Commercial des Musées Nationaux, Palais du Louvre, Paris Ier'. To avoid any subsequent misunderstanding between us, would you be so kind as to take note of this address and send all your letters to the said department."

[32] With the documentation available at present it is not possible to identify this intermediary. However, it seems that intermediaries often helped to manage the ordering of plaster casts from the Louvre to Spain. For a case study, based on archival documents, of the procurement of plaster casts of Mesopotamian pieces from the Louvre by the Museo de Reproducciones Artísticas de Madrid, the only other museum in Spain exclusively devoted to plaster casts, see Garcia-Ventura 2020.

In fact, the order was not placed until 1935. Luckily, a copy of a typewritten letter dated 10 January 1935 from Bilbao to the Louvre has been preserved (AMRB 232/005/011). This letter contains an order for seven plaster casts: three of Egyptian pieces and four of Mesopotamian ones. Among the latter, we find the Hammurabi stele, at a cost of 1500 francs – a detail that confirms the ordering of the copy in raw plaster, taken from the 1932 sales catalogue mentioned above. About six months after the order was placed, the Louvre was able to send the boxes containing these plaster casts, as confirmed by the typewritten letter and the detailed delivery note sent from Paris to the Bilbao Museum on 17 July 1935. Morancé, who personally signed this letter, announced the shipment, as well as the pending payment as follows:

> "J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que comme suite à vos instructions, nous avons fait expédier à votre transitaire à Bilbao, les moulages demandés. Je vous en remets ci-joint facture et vous saurais gré de nous en faire parvenir le montant par chèque à l'ordre de l'Agent comptable de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux."[33] (AMRB 232/005/015).

Unfortunately, the smooth communication that seems to have existed until that moment was interrupted. A typewritten letter from the Louvre to the Bilbao museum, dated 16 November 1935, suggests that the museum not only failed to acknowledge receipt of the plaster casts, but also had not paid the invoice within the stipulated period. The letter reads as follows:

> "J'ai l'honneur de vous rappeler ma lettre du 17 Juillet 1935 concernant votre commande de moulages. J'espère que ceux-ci vous sont arrivés en parfait état et vous donnent toute satisfaction.
>
> Je vous saurais gré pour la régularité de notre comptabilité de bien vouloir me faire régler avant la fin de mois ma facture de 4.350 francs représentant la fourniture de moulages, l'emballage, l'assurance et le transport."[34] (AMRB 232/005/016).

So far, I have not found the letters that the Bilbao museum sent to the Louvre workshop. Very few copies of correspondence are kept at the Bilbao museum, as we saw above. Therefore, we do not know how they responded; nor do we have any later correspondence from the Louvre either confirming payment or making a further request. This may suggest that the Bilbao museum did indeed settle its debt, and in fact this impression is strengthened by the presence of a typewritten copy of a letter sent by the Bilbao museum to the Louvre, dated 28 April 1936, announcing the ordering of more plaster casts (AMRB 232/005/017). It seems very unlikely that the museum would have placed a new order in 1936 if it had not paid the bill from the previous year.

It seems that this letter was accompanied by a list of the plaster casts to be ordered. Unfortunately, as no copy of this list has been preserved in the archive, it is impossible to establish whether the pieces were included in the museum's collection. Nonetheless, it seems improbable that this last order to the Louvre ever materialized. In July 1936, a few weeks after this letter was sent, the Spanish Civil War broke out, a tragedy which irrevocably changed the situation and, with regard to the story that concerns us here, drastically affected the accumulation of exhibits for the collections of the Bilbao Museum.

Some final remarks: the effects of the reception of the stele of Hammurabi's Law Code in Spain

In this paper I have put together some examples of the enthusiastic reception of the Law Code stele of Hammurabi in Spain in the press, and also in the form of the acquisition of plaster casts. Through these processes the stele became known to certain sectors of society, outside academia as well as inside, and thanks to this Mesopotamia took up its place in the Spanish imaginary of an Antiquity hitherto populated overwhelmingly by Greek and Roman material culture and written sources.

But what impact did the text of the stele have in Spain? Was it used to teach cuneiform writing, or to teach Akkadian? Unfortunately, this does not seem to have been the case, even though this was one of the main uses of the plaster casts of the stele in other countries, such as the US.[35] To quote Pınar Durgun: "even today, copies of the Hammurapi stele in the Harvard

[33] "I have the honour of informing you that, following your instructions, we have sent your forwarding agent in Bilbao the casts requested. I am enclosing the invoice and would be grateful if you could send us the amount by cheque payable to the Accountant of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux."

[34] "I have the honour of reminding you of my letter of 17 July, 1935 concerning your order for castings. I trust that these have reached you in perfect condition and are to your complete satisfaction.
I would be grateful if you would send me payment before the end of the month for my invoice of 4,350 francs, covering the supply of castings, packaging, insurance and transport."

[35] However, in Germany, a country with a well-established tradition of teaching Cuneiform writing and Akkadian language at the beginning of the twentieth century, only three university collections linked to ancient Near Eastern studies departments owned plaster casts of the Hammurabi stele (in Leipzig, Münster and Göttingen). For more details about the casts of this piece in Germany, see Rehm 2018a: 36–37. On the acquisition, history and potential use of the casts at Leipzig and Münster, see Rehm 2018b.

Museum of Ancient Near East, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and the Yale Babylonian Collection are used in ancient western Asian language instruction. These copies enable students to examine the cuneiform text in the form it was originally seen" (Durgun 2022).

In Spain, even though the rediscovery of the Hammurabi stele at the beginning of the twentieth century aroused considerable interest (even among non-specialists, as borne out by the article by the ophthalmologist Castillo) it was not until the very end of the century that the first complete, direct translation from Akkadian to Spanish was published. The translation was the work of Joaquín Sanmartín Ascaso in 1999.[36] It was only in the 1980s and 1990s that the efforts of scholars born between 1935 and 1945 to establish ancient Near Eastern studies in Spain at public universities and research centres began to bear fruit (Vidal 2013: 6–9). So the Law Code stele of Hammurabi was, and still is, an important indicator of the health of ancient Near Eastern studies in Spain and of the public's familiarity with ancient Mesopotamia.

[36] For a biographical profile of Sanmartín, which mentions that his 1999 translation received an award of the Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias Españolas, see Vidal 2013: 102–104. On the framework in which ancient Near Eastern studies developed in the 1980s and the 1990s in Spain, with a focus on the geographical and institutional context in which this translation was produced, see Vidal 2016.

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Chapter 7:
New gleanings at the Temples of Sidon, Tyre and Jerusalem (Decoding Phoenician Art – II)[1]

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Non semper ea sunt, quae videntur
Gaius Iulius Phaedrus[2]

Abstract. Ever since its publication shortly after the mid 19th century, a bowl from Nimrud depicting four identical representations of Phoenician shrines has elicited different interpretations. Following a critical review of comparable images on bowls, equally reproduced in other media of contemporary Phoenician art, a renewed examination of the lower profile of the sanctuaries' decorated architraves elucidates that we are in fact confronted here with an apparatus ensuring the fixation of textile on a rod between the capitals of the structure's supporting columns. Consequently, the composition featuring antithetical winged, hawk-headed, sphinxes (Phoenician and Hebrew *Kerubim*) by no means evokes the presence of a cult statue, but most appropriately depicts the embroidered design of temple curtains known from Biblical descriptions and documented by Canaanite and Phoenician model shrines.

Keywords: Phoenician iconography, Biblical studies, Nimrud bowls and ivories, marsh pattern design, Jerusalem temple, Temple models, *pārōket.*

Introduction

Between New Year's Eve 1849 and 7 January 1850, Austen Henri Layard cleared the contents of a chamber (Room AA) of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud built under the reign of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE). A spectacular hoard of, predominantly, Levantine metalwork was discovered, including 15 copper cauldrons, iron tripods and sceptres, no less than 150 plain, engraved and/or embossed vessels, amongst the latter two bowls now in the British Museum reassessed in the present contribution (Nimrud bowls no. 9 and no. 52).[3] Their designs are executed in the most refined Egyptianizing style. Oriented on the cardinal points, they are repeated four times, separated by an equal number of dividing decorative elements. Four aediculas or *naïskoi* (if not a passageway decorated in relief with the characteristic features of such shrines) are separated from each other by a single papyrus stalk above which a winged scarab hovers. Ever since its publication in Layard's *Monuments of Niniveh* II (London 1853: pl. 63), Nimrud Bowl no. 9 has become a figurehead of Phoenicia n artistic traditions in a panoply of publications on Near Eastern cultures

[1] It is a pleasure to join my colleagues in the realm of ancient Near Eastern Studies in this well merited tribute to Tallay, who we dearly hope will continue to cast her expert eye on the many riddles of the labyrinthine iconography of Levantine cultures remaining to be solved. A first trial version of this paper was presented at the Berlin *International Assyriological Rencontre* (1994) and a summary of the pre-press version in the Library of Congress, Washington, at the occasion of the "Tyre Day" (2015). Figure 1a appears by kind permission of Dr Paul Collins, British Museum, whilst Figure 1b is presumably an original B/W photograph used by Luigi Palma di Cesnola as comparative evidence for his collection of Cypriote antiquities to whet the appetite of European museum curators prior to their acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For a first sequel in our "Decoding Phoenician Art" series, see Gubel 2012 on the ingenious use of Egyptian(izing) motifs to translate admonitions of early first millennium BCE Near Eastern Loyalty Oaths. Permission to reproduce items from their collections was also generously granted by Hélène le Meaux of the Louvre Museum, Jonathan Tubb (British Museum), the Israel Antiquities Authority as well as by Candace Richards, Assistant Curator, Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney. I owe the photograph Figure 1d to the generosity of Dr Francesca Onnis and the permission to reproduce the model Figure 12 to Prof. Yosef Garfinkel with many thanks. Without the PDF versions of articles kindly sent to me from London (St John Simpson) and Paris (Carole Roche and Robert Hawley), it would have been impossible to meet the deadline of this contribution; cheers to all!

[2] "Things are not always what they seem to be," axiom attributed to the Latin fabulist Phaedrus (ca. 15 BCE–50 CE) and adopted here as in upcoming sequels as a most appropriate motto of our *Decoding Phoenician Art* contributions which invariably substantiate the view that the maxim "what you see is what you get" is not always valid when analyzing Phoenician iconography.

[3] For a full color photograph of no. 9, see also https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_N-9; Barnett 1974: pl. I for Charles Doswell Hodder's 1849 coloured drawing of the Room of the Bronzes; Onnis 2009: 139 for a concise bibliography on the Nimrud bowls, to which add Matthäus 2009 and 2019, Vella 2008 and Gubel 2012. The fragmentary Nimrud bowl no. 52 is reproduced in Layard 1853, top row of pl. 68 to the right of a bowl from the same workshop whereupon striding winged sphinxes alternate with groupings of three stalks of papyrus with a winged scarab flanked by winged uraeus snakes.

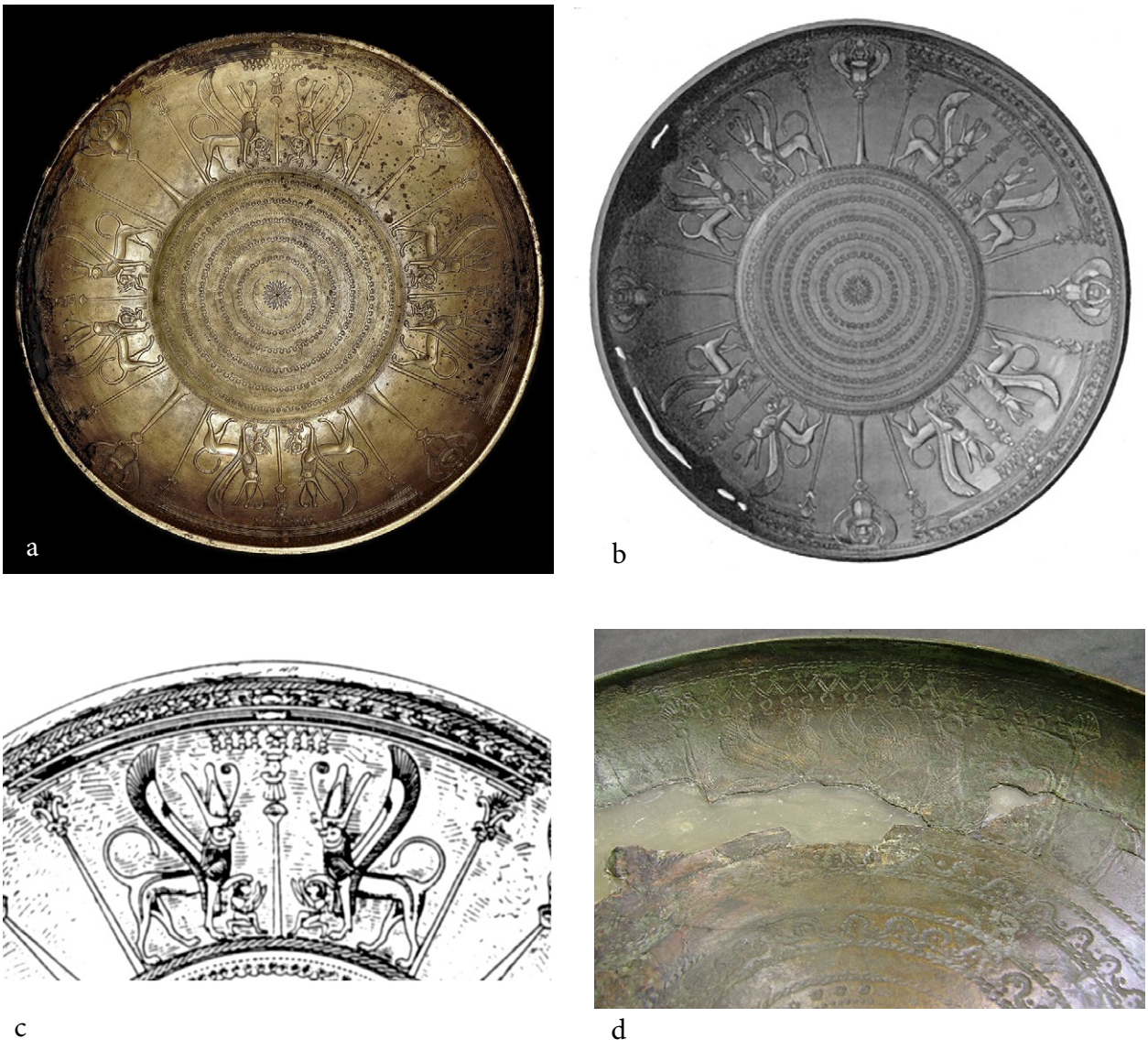


Figure 1a–d. a) Nimrud: copper alloy bowl no. 9 (BM 115505), *c.* 800 BCE (© The British Museum); b) Nimrud copper alloy bowl no. 9 (BM 115505) after G. Colonna-Ceccaldi, *Album des photographies chypriotes*, MSS (ca. 1872?); c) Nimrud copper alloy bowl no. 52. After Perrot and Chipiez 1884: 738-9, fig. 399; d) Nimrud: fragmentary copper alloy bowl no. 52 F. (© F. Onnis/ The British Museum).

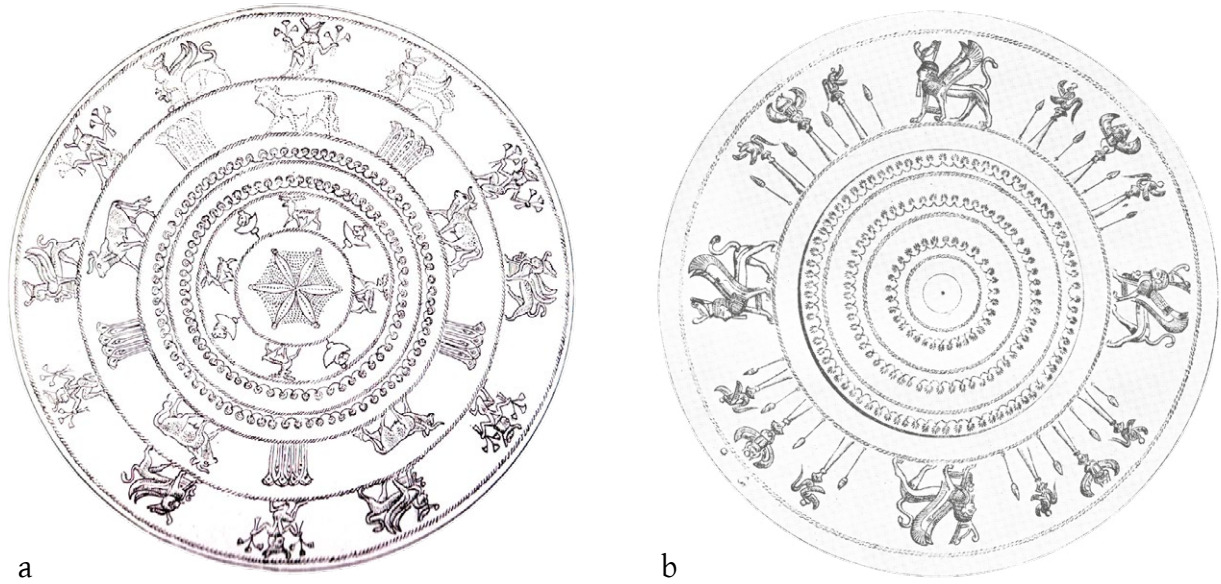
(Figure 1a–c).[4] In spite of the bowl's impressive "bibliographical" *curriculum vitae,* however, a most peculiar detail recurring on bowl no. 52 (Figure 1d) has escaped the attention of the scholarly community, the particular significance of which will be highlighted below.

Nimrud bowls 9 and 52 in the context of the Phoenician "marsh-pattern" group workshops

Both Nimrud bowls 9 and 52 featuring the aediculas under study belong to the "marsh pattern group," a term coined by R.D. Barnett after the homonymous symbol used on British Ordnance Survey maps which indeed recalls the "very degenerated lotus pattern" on floral chains running around the bowls' centres.[5] In his pioneering studies, he linked the group's style and

[4] An exhaustive bibliography will no doubt be provided in John Curtis' upcoming monograph on Nimrud's bronze bowls. For the purpose of the present paper, see Wagner 1980: 55, cat. 56 (with bibliography), 134–142 (on baldachins as represented in Phoenician art in general), pl. 4 and Pisano 2006: *passim*. Our Figure 1b is an archival document from G. Colonna-Ceccaldi's recently rediscovered "lost" *Album des photographies chypriotes*.

[5] Referred to as Group 1 with four subdivisions in Barnett 1967; in his 1974 study, the term marsh pattern was preferred as more appealing to distinguish the production from that of the star and bull bowls or yet other series.



a b

Figure 2a–b. a) Nimrud bowl (BM 91420) drawing after X-ray (after Barnett 1974: 21 fig. 2); b) Bowl from the Idaean Cave, *ibidem*: pl. 2), Heraklion, Archaeological Museum, ca. 800–750 BCE.

narrative content of bowls in Nimrud found (as booty, dowries or diplomatic gifts) with samples exported from the Levant as far as Crete (Figures 2a–b).

Half a century later, we believe that the original design of the marsh pattern is more likely that of a palmette, alternating indeed on the festoons of an early bar-handled Nimrud bowl with their buds or, otherwise, with lotus flowers (Figure 3a).[6] The inner concentric frieze surrounding the medallion of a Phoenician bowl which arrived before the end of the ninth century BCE in Calabria (Figure 3b) displays another variant closer to the classic palmettes ("Schalenpalmetten").[7] Pending the artists' choice to represent but one or, alternatively, two pictorial friezes, similar compass-traced marsh pattern chains could be multiplied up to 5 concentric units as is the case on no. 9. The other bowl features only two such friezes, in line with its more unobtrusive design to which we will return below.

Palaeographic dating of the marsh pattern bowls

The late ninth century palaeography of the name of *ʾbpṭ* on a bowl (no. 19), the motifs of which refer to North Syria (Carchemish ?), is withheld here as yet another indication that the production of the "marsh group" bowl already started earlier in the first millennium, especially so since their iconic frieze is elsewhere exclusively used by Phoenician artists.[8] Other bowls which are plain except for marsh pattern chains and a brief inscription, include the roughly contemporary Nimrud bowl no. 75 bearing the Hebrew name *ʾḥy w*.[9] According to its eighth century BCE inscription, the lesser publicised bowl N.5 with a single frieze around the central medallion belonged to the son of a Ḥilleṣ, a court jester engaged in an unidentified Phoenician city.[10] Whether a coincidence or not, an identical personal name is attested on a fragment of a bronze bowl from the Ready collection as that of a minister of a Phoenician king Milkiram. In his turn, the latter has

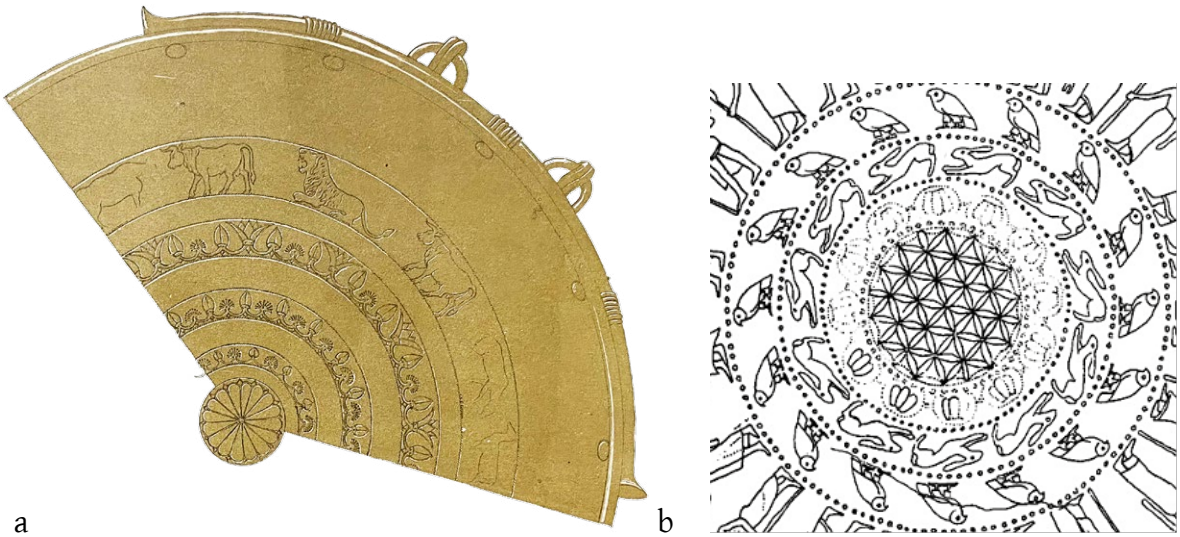
[6] Barnett 1974: pl. IX bowl no. 75 for a standard marsh pattern arrangement. Cf. the festoons of the more classical palmettes in Layard 1853: pl. 62a, a design which represents a hallmark of early first millennium BCE Phoenician art as illustrated by numerous reliefs (Arwad, Sidon, *infra* n. 45), ivories (Nimrud) and small bronzes, to be enumerated here. For a rare example of a marsh pattern festoon on a Hebrew seal, see Avigad and Sass 1997: no. 363.

[7] Markoe 1985: 161–162, 232 CA1; Matthäus 2019: 250–251, fig. 4. To the best of my knowledge, no identification of the main frieze of deities has been made hitherto. Doubts are few that they represent the Egyptian Decan Gods (or Star Gods of Time), an astronomical calculation system improved under the reign of Osorkon II (872–837 BCE).

[8] For a colour photograph, see https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_N-19. The motif of a pair of vultures devouring the carrion of a hare (cf. the unpublished bowl no. 55) ranks amongst the most popular designs of the early first millennium, recurring also on the "Yunus Cemetery" scarabs: Boardman and Moorey 1986: 45, pl. 13:1. It can hardly be a mere coincidence that the inner friezes of the bowl fig. 3b reproduce hares and hawks, birds of prey replacing the vultures.

[9] https://www.quotescosmos.com/bible/bible-concordance/H283.html#verses and Barnett 1967 for a complete list of inscribed bowls of this type.

[10] Heltzer 1982. The existence of the title "court-jester" is not without importance for the identification of males with balls in their hands, accompanied or not by musicians on seals and bowls alike (Markoe 1985: 350–351 U8).



a b

Figure 3a–b. a) Festoons on palmettes on a bronze bowl from Nimrud, ca. 900 BCE, after Layard 1853: pl. 57a; b). Frieze of palmettes bordering the net medallion of a bronze bowl from Francavilla Marittima, Calabria, ca. 850 BCE, Reggio Calabria Archaeological Museum (detail after Markoe 1985: 232).

been identified by Lemaire (1976) as a king ruling Tyre, viz. the Tyro-Sidonian kingdom towards 750 BCE.[11]

Barnett also identified the so-called "star bowl" group: on one example from Olympia (Figure 4), the outer frieze is divided into eight sectors, by turns representing statues of a horned god of the "Baal Hammon " type and a "Naked Astarte " in shrines with composite columns crowned by capitals, in turn supporting an architrave decorated with a winged sun disc.[12] Interestingly enough, the remaining quadrants were apparently copied from cultic reliefs, in which the bronzeworker referred to in the Aramaic inscription of the early

Figure 4. Bronze bowl from Olympia, National Museum Athens NM 7941, ca. 800 BCE (after Frankfort 1970: 328 fig. 391).

eighth century BCE, adapted Phoenician originals to the taste of his hometown.[13] Subsequent attempts to isolate more (sub-) groups of the Phoenician bowls' typological and production features may be bypassed here for they do not provide new examples of shrines

[11] Barnett 1975: 47–48, 50 fig. 16. On later attestations of the name of Milkiram, cfr. *EDPC* 2018: 170 s.v. and Masson and Sznycer 1972: 92–93 for onomastic evidence from Cyprus. A king Ḥilleṣ, son of king Uzriyya (*sic*) is referred to on an unpublished stela typologically very close to the Tyre al-Bass group tentatively dated to the ninth–eighth century BCE: https://www.sixbid.com/deages/timeline-auctions/ 6746/antiquitiesegyptian/5564981/phoenician-funerary-steleforking?term&orderCol=lot_number&orderDirection=asc&priceFrom&displayMode=large&auctionSessions=&sidebarIsSticky=false. A contemporary seal curiously enough reproducing but half of the Phoenician theme of griffins at either side of a sacred tree was carved on behalf of a Hebrew client named Ḥilleṣyau (Deutsch and Lemaire 2003: 11 no. 3). On the origin and evolution of the motif of mythological animals situated in trees, see Gubel 2009. Finally, the Phoenician dipinto painted "in the central decades of the 7th century BCE" on an alabaster amphora identifies the owner of a tomb in the Laurita necropolis (Almuñecar, Granada) as belonging to "Magon, son of Arish (grand)son of Ḥilleṣ" (Zamorra 2013: *passim* for an in-depth study of the context and the dipinto of this amphora). As a component of personal names, Ḥilleṣ can mean "[DN] has extricated" in the Hebrew and Phoenician / Punic onomasticon as B. Sass was so kind as to inform me.

[12] Figs. 1, 4, 6–7 *infra* for the evolution of identical capitals inspired by Egyptian New Kingdom types, Kletter 2015: 55–63 on their Proto-Aeolic versions.

[13] Amadasi Guzzo 1978 on Aramaic inscriptions in the Phoenician Mediterranean trading network.

Figure 5. Engraved bronze bowl, unknown provenance, Private US collection (courtesy of the present owner).

(Imai 1980; Curtis 1988; Hughes, Lang and Leese 1988; Onnis 2009).

In one of the most recent efforts dealing more specifically with old and new examples from Cyprus (Salamis), Rhodes (Camiros) and Crete (Eleutherna), H. Matthäus proposed a *terminus ante quem* for the marsh pattern bowls' production around 750–725 BCE (Matthäus 2019). We readily agree with our colleague's chronological assessment of the marsh pattern bowls' waning production, in our opinion due to the gradual decline of Phoenician political autonomy and the output of luxury arts as incriminating side-effects of Tiglath Pileser III's 738 BCE campaign in the Levant. The same holds true for the affiliated class of Phoenician "star bowls" with their occasional iconographic overlaps including the four identical shrines (Figure 4). The purely academic style of the sphinxes with one forepaw raised aloft in the void (where are the fallen warriors?) on a bronze bowl interred shortly before 730–710 BCE in the Orthi Petra necropolis of Eleutherna and yet unpublished bowls such as our Figure 5 feature engraved designs, henceforth a general rule. This may suggest that the stocks of punches used for *repoussé* designs were dwindling in the course of the later eighth century BCE.[14] The fact that similar groupings of sphinxes, snakes and scarabs on papyrus stalks recur within the Cretan find group but without the shrines, points in that direction (Figures 2a–b, 5). This suggestion may indeed be corroborated by the shrines' absence, which still frame the sphinxes on Nimrud bowls no. 9 and no. 52, from the original workshop.

Iconographical analysis of Nimrud Bowls no. 9, no. 52, and related productions

"Marsh pattern" bowls no. 9 and no. 52 (Figure 1) feature pictorial friezes arranged according to the popular quadripartite scheme, in use, roughly, from 875 to 725 BCE at the latest. The main designs and secondary clusters of smaller motifs serving as dividers are reduced by abandoning the clear-cut vignette arrangement of the Olympia patera (Figure 4).[15] Separated from each other by a single scarab hovering atop papyrus stalks but not flanked by uraei as on other bowls from the same workshop (e.g. Figures 2b and 5), the shrines do not house cult statues as is likely the case on the Olympia bowl. Neither do they represent

[14] Stampolidis 2016: 290 fig. 13; for the best photograph, cfr. Stampolidis 2004: 277 no. 349. On the classical viz. Cypro-Phoenician group, see Markoe 1985: 156 (Period III Bowls, ca. 710–675 BCE).

[15] The reduction is indeed striking compared to the Mount Ida marsh pattern bronze bowl fig. 2b on which the flying scarab is flanked by an *uraeus* snake perched on a papyrus to the left and the right. On its counter piece found re-used as the lid of cinerary stamnos in tomb A1KI of the Orthi Petra cemetery (730–700 BCE) a "falcon headed god Horus" replaces the scarab on the central papyrus stalk, whereas "between the addorsed sphinxes of each pair, is a lotus flower, above which is a scarab with open wings" (Stampolidis 2004: 277 no. 349).

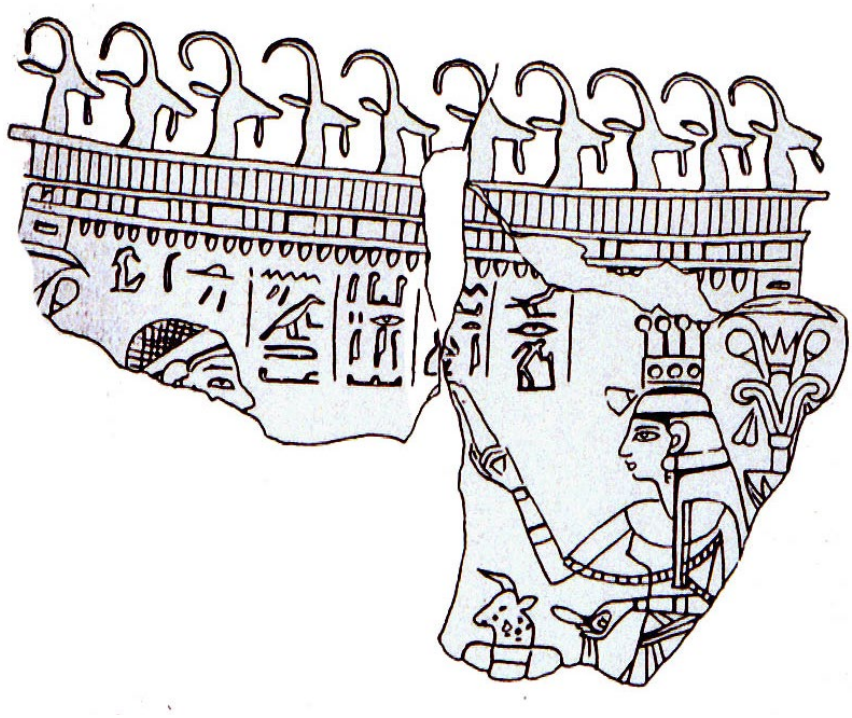


Figure 6. The "Marriage vessel of Niqmaddu II", Ugarit, later 14th century BCE (after Collon 2011: 37 :3.2).

lively offering scenes as on an unprovenanced bowl now in Boston, but a rather static or, perhaps more to the point, heraldic scene involving two striding winged hieracocephalic sphinxes on no. 9, replaced by human-headed hybrids on no. 52.[16] The latter are placed at either side of a winged scarab on the papyrus stalk discussed earlier, a motif here reduced, however, to the palmette. In its turn the palmette is oftentimes replaced by a lotus flower on several eighth century BCE seals produced in Northwest Semitic workshops.[17]

The aediculas

A comparison between bowls no. 9 and no. 52 points out that the latter (Figure 1d) was decorated in a more summary way, with capitals recalling the palmette of the marsh pattern type, whereas the more detailed no. 9 (Figures 1a–c) faithfully reproduces the original Egyptian columns known in the Levant since the Late Bronze Age (Figure 6).[18] It is noteworthy that local interpretations of the same Egyptian prototype flanking the ivory plaques of a bedhead from Ugarit, are even closer to our capitals.[19] The shrines' architraves are decorated on bowl no. 9 by rows of *uraei* with outstretched wings and solar crowns; placed at either side of a small, winged sun-disc, one group faces inwards, the other outwards (Figures 1a–b, 7). Nearly the entire length of the cavetto moulding underneath is covered by the tripartite wings of yet another solar disc with small flanking *uraei*; at either edge of the corniche, a tiny vulture, originally the symbol of the Theban mother goddess and "Queen of Heaven" Mut is represented: Figure 7.[20] A sizeable stone pedestal from the immediate vicinity of Sidon plausibly antedating the Assyrian destruction by Esarhaddon in 677 BCE is decorated with a similar row of *uraei* flanked by the Horus hawk, a traditional protector of Upper Egypt and patron of the royal courts of Egypt and Sidon alike (Figure 8).[21] Sidon and its immediate environs have moreover yielded several Iron Age II stone *naïskoi* (and representations thereof in clay), invariably reproducing the *uraeus* friezes and winged sun-discs also popular on what is likely to represent

[16] Markoe 1985: 218–219, 350–351 U8 for this bowl now in Boston displaying a rather "outlandish" (Transjordanian?) style: https://collections.mfa.org/objects/164742/decorated-omphalos-bowl?ctx-=eb79c6c7-036b-41b2-a1dd-b92cf8bcc43f&idx=24. The scenes are set under the arched roof of four interconnected baldachins supported by columns with fanciful double papyriform capitals.

[17] Avigad and Sass 1997 for a large choice of examples in different regional styles: nos. 159, 886, 1085, 1136, 1143 and 1175.

[18] Although more schematically indicated, it should be noted that the capitals of the shrines of the Olympia bowl (Figure 3) correctly copy the contour of this type of capitals.

[19] Yon 1997: 146 no. 21.

[20] Originally referring to the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt (*uraeus* and vulture respectively) in Egyptian iconography, one may wonder whether this concept was not adopted by the Phoenicians to symbolize the contemporary Tyro-Sidonian coalition elsewhere epitomized in Phoenician art by the *sm3-t3wi* ("unification") motif abruptly abandoned after the dissolution of this "bicephalic Tyro-Sidonian kingdom" in the later eighth century BCE.

[21] Caubet, Fontan and Gubel 2002: 85 no. 76, cf. https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010146856.

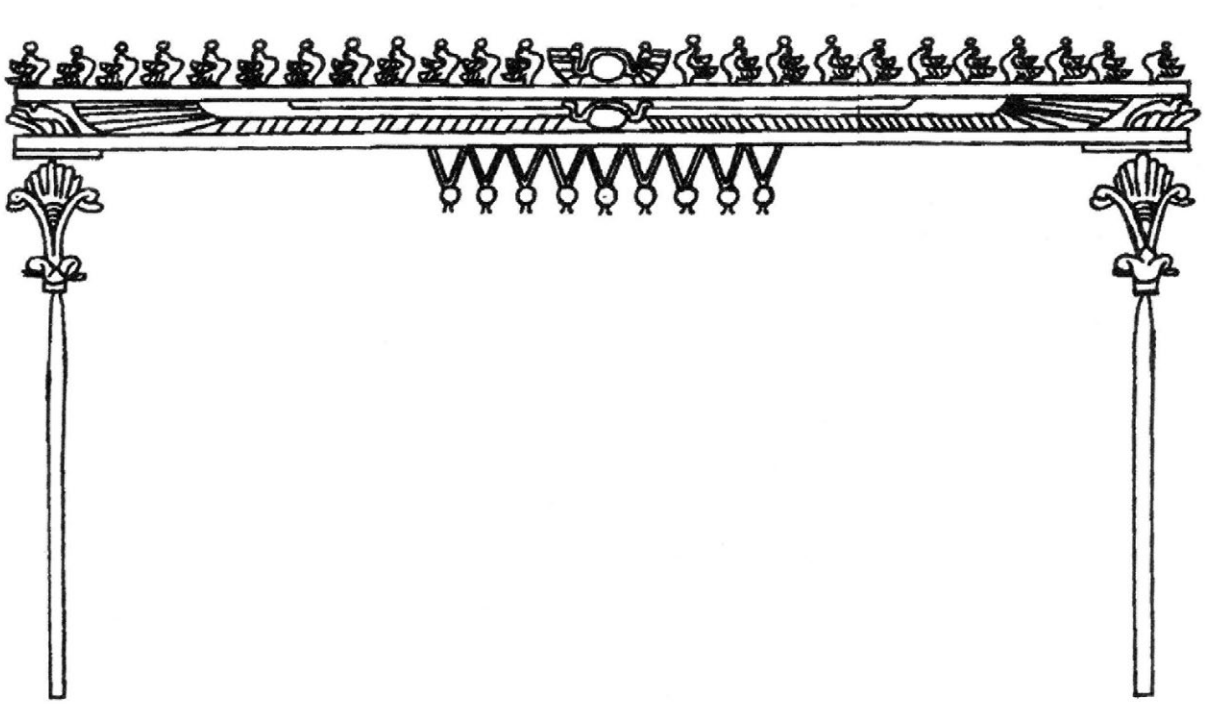


Figure 7. Drawing of the shrine on bowl no. 9 (after Wagner 1980: pl. 4:1). Note the marsh pattern-like upper half of the capitals emerging from the lower ones which had evolved into a palmette capital.

Figure 8. Column base, Sidon, ninth–eighth century BCE, Louvre Museum, Paris AO 29406. © Réunion des Musées Nationaux.

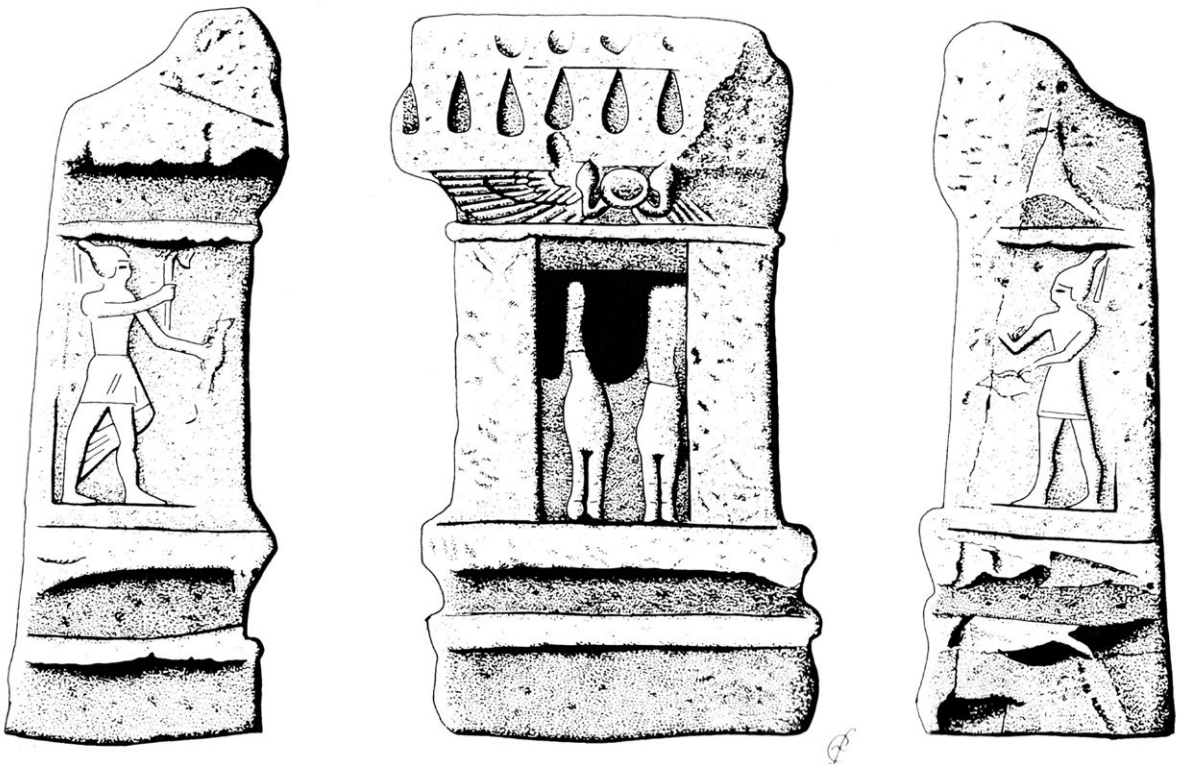


Figure 9. Drawing by C. Florimont of a limestone *naiskos* from Sidon, Paris, Louvre AO 2060.

the Sidonian input of the Phoenician ivories (Figure 9).[22] The youthful twin gods (with whom the kings of the Tyro-Sidonian coalition possibly identified themselves) represented on the aforesaid *naiskoi* and ivories carry ram-headed sceptres and trefoil red slip *oinochoai* of a type abundantly produced in the Tyro-Sidonian area during the late tenth–eighth centuries BCE. They oftentimes flank a Sacred tree of the type referred to by the capitals of the columns supporting the baldachin's superstructure.[23] Considering the fact that they recur with the same regalia in Persian age Sidonian coinage and on the architrave of the nearby Hellenistic temple of Chîmm, it is obvious that bowls no. 9, no. 52 and related examples were more specifically manufactured in this Phoenician metropolis long before its sack – in our view not fortuitously coinciding with the abrupt halt of the bowls' production and distribution.[24] The drawings of the cultic structure of bowl no. 52, rendered without the supporting columns with double palmette capitals in the *editio princeps* are completed here in our Figure 1d.

The scene placed "inside" the shrine

The scene depicted between the columns supporting the more detailed representation of the building's superstructure on bowl no. 9 (Figures 1a–c) has invariably been misinterpreted as featuring *griffins* (actually, hawk-headed, viz. hieracocephalic sphinxes) *trampling* enemies in analogy with the ancestral Pharaonic propagandistic motif.[25] In Egyptian New Kingdom iconography, hieracocephalic sphinxes were regarded as a manifestation of the Theban war god Montu, equated with the Sidonian martial deity Resheph.[26] In this case, however, the sphinxes obviously put a forepaw in a *protective gesture* on the head of two kneeling figures in Phoenician attire as on a green jasper scarab from a collection once formed in Sidon (Figure 10).[27] Here, the hawk-headed sphinx clearly *protects* a man fallen in the heat of a battle, presumably even a Libyan mercenary

[22] Gubel 2001. For the examples in clay from the Phoenician cemeteries of Aya'a and Hélaliéh, cfr. Gubel 1986: 274–276 with fig. 10.
[23] For the ivories, see Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013: 140–145 nos. 64–94. A more recent variant with upright volutes between the double palmette capitals figures on the equestrian breastplate from Salamis and Cypro-Phoenician glyptic (Gubel 2005: 118, fig. 7).
[24] On the fame of bowls as a hallmark of Phoenician/Sidonian workshops in Homeric literature, see *Il.* XXIII, 740–745, *Od.* VI, 615–619 and XV, 113–119.
[25] Kilted winged hawk-headed sphinxes with a *pschent* crown were a popular device on eighth century BCE seals (e.g., Avigad and Sass 1997: nos. 85, 116 (with solar disc), 135, 143 (couchant), 160, 168, 182 190, 193, 325, 345, 370). Hebrew inscriptions often added; Phoenician "Samaria style" and local copies: nos. 1069 (possibly Philistine), 1157 (couchant, with solar disc), 1172 (striding with *uraeus* in front, late ninth–eighth century BCE), 1174 (couchant, double crown), 1190 (facing pseudo *ankh*).
[26] Gubel 2005: 121 with no. 58.
[27] Gubel 1993: 108 figs. 16–18 and Gubel 2000: 195–196, fig. 7 for other examples on seals and ivories featuring hieracocephalic sphinxes *protecting* fallen warriors.

Figure 10. Red speckled green jasper scaraboid seal of *ʾny*, Saida, eighth century BCE, US collection (after Avigad and Sass 1997: no. 1128 CAD reconstruction).

of the *Meshwesh* tribe as suggested by the Šwt plume on his wig.[28] The hieracocephalic sphinxes of the "Intermediate Tradition" ivories on the contrary, rip up the faces of the fallen soldiers, a degeneration of the original concept later recurring on bowls of the Cypro Phoenician and Etruscan class.[29] The original motif is found on late ninth–eighth century BCE Phoenician ivories[30] and seals,[31] as well as on a recently published marsh-pattern bowl featuring seven winged sphinxes with knobbed and tasselled helmets protecting similar kneeling figures.[32] The kneeling figures can be compared with the young solar deity of an Phoenician agate seal with a secondary inscription of a minister of king 'Uzziyau of Judah (769–733 BCE) represented atop a papyrus and bud clump – a familiar motif of the marsh pattern.[33] Consequently, the underlying message of the composition definitely involves some Ba'al, assuming his fearsome manifestation of Horon, coming to the rescue of his devotees wherever or whenever they are in need of his divine protection. To conclude, if there is any analogy to be drawn here, it is rather with the Phoenician deities depicted on many bowls of the "Cypro-Phoenician" group as recently underscored by their identification in the realm of loyalty oaths textually invoking Astarte-of-the Battle, Milqart, Resheph and presumably yet other members of local pantheons.[34]

In between the sphinxes, an aegis with a leonine head hovers above a papyrus stalk, a highly popular motif on late ninth–eighth centuries BCE Phoenician seals (Figure 11a), ivories (Figure 11b–c) and bronze bowls (e.g. Figure 2b) expressing power and vigour.[35]

In the design of a marsh pattern Nimrud bowl (Figure 2a) equally featuring other motifs such as androcephalic striding sphinxes and clusters of papyrus stalks, similar aegisses alternate rather aimlessly with ungulates.[36] The motif ultimately derives from the iconography of the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet oftentimes called "the terrifying one."[37] Moreover, a lack of detail in the rendering of the ears does not exclude a confusion with her pacified manifestation as Bastet, especially so since both deities merge into each other in the Egyptian Myth of *the Distant Goddess*, the popularity of which in Phoenician communities of the early first millennium BCE has most recently been divulged.[38] The absence of similar aegisses on later eighth and early seventh century BCE bowls from the Mediterranean islands may be taken as evidence for a higher date for no. 9.

The animated scene: see-through on a cult statue or a veil?

Set within the embrasure of a shrine, the question arises if the scenery depicted would possibly contain a monumental composite cult statue. However, late ninth–eighth century BCE Phoenician sculptural evidence provides no clues at all for such a view. The find of several tenth century BCE model shrines in Khirbet Qeiyafa 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem may furnish a first clue: as determined by the excavators, one of the model shrines (Figure 12) likely depicts a curtain twisted over a chain or rod reminiscent of the Biblical references.[39] The representations of the shrines on bowls no. 9 and no. 52 provide us moreover with a long-overlooked clue as to the correct interpretation of the image's precise role in the present context (Figure 1). In this context, the game changer is the trellis fringe with tassels in the form of pomegranates pendent from the braided bundles and boughs as on the Phoenician bowls and, likewise, on the early eighth century BCE North Syrian (Zincirli ?) ivory furniture panels from room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud (Figure 13).[40] The tassels of the seat cushions' fringes represented on these ivory panels are occasionally reminiscent of the cones of the trees fertilized by the human and griffin-

[28] Avigad and Sass 1997: no. 1128. Gubel 1993: 108; Herrmann 2005: pl. IV:10 right. For the identifying features of Libyan tribes, see Nibbi 1986: 84 fig. 39 and Brandl 2008: frontispiece (left), 163, fig. 26, pl. 17,16 and DSok. O-3.1 reigns of Osorkon II (872–837 BCE) and Shoshenq III (837–798 BCE).

[29] Resp. Gubel 2005: 121, 135 fig. 23 (breastplate with winged lion), 136–137 fig. 24 (androcephalic sphinx) and Markoe 1985: 257 (Cy8 center) and 286 (E3).

[30] Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013: 129, 157–159 nos. 167–180, 166–167, nos. 237–239 with references to additional examples. All such plaques confirm that the kneeling person is represented in a worshipping attitude, not that of a *man* begging to be spared (cf. e.g., *ibidem*: 135 no. 39 and 40 for a god (Heh) assuming the same stance (189 no. 373).

[31] Avigad and Sass 1997: no. 77 (kilted hawk-headed sphinx in front of a cartouche).

[32] Shlomo and Aliza Moussaieff collection, London (Goodnick-Westenholz 2004: 138 no. 98).

[33] Avigad and Sass 1997: no. 4. Also 126 for a similar tree-genius related to a design of the "Unusually shaped ivories": Gubel 2009: 409 no. 1082 (kneeling worshipper), 420 no. 1108 (inspired by a Phoenician original).

[34] Gubel 2012 on specific Phoenician interpretations of the triumphant Pharaoh motif.

[35] For the bowls, cf. Layard 1853: pl. 59e.

[36] Barnett 1974: 14, 21, pl. II; Gubel 2005: 127–129 fig. 15 for the iconological interpretation of the kneeling figure waving papyrus reeds on this bowl and Egyptian prefigurations.

[37] See Gubel 2008 and 2022 for a detailed analysis on the subject.

[38] *Ibidem*.

[39] Yosef Garfinkel and Madeleine Mumcuoglu in Garfinkel, Ganor and Hasel 2018: 84–96; on the *pārōket*, Bordreuil 2006 and, on the model shrines from this site, Schroer 2017 and Kletter 2015.

[40] Mallowan and Herrmann 1974: 33 with nos. 11–15.

a

b

c

Figure 11 a–c. a) Seal of *dml*ʾ *bn pqḥyw* (after Deutsch and Lemaire 2000: no. 4); b) ivory panel from Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, ninth–eighth century BCE, Baghdad, Iraq Museum (after Mallowan 1966: 549 no. 482); c) ivory aegis, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, ninth–eighth century BCE, Rogers Fund, 1962. 62.269.10. Public Domain.

Figure 12. Elaborate portable shrine from Khirbet Qeiyafa, tenth century BCE (from Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu in Garfinkel, Ganor and Hansel 2018: 85, fig.5.7)

Figure 13. Ivory Panel from North Syria (Zincirli or thereabouts), late ninth–early eighth century BCE, Nimrud, Fort Shalmaneser, SW 37, NM59.3 Nicholson Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney.

headed genies on Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs (disguised in local attire on the North Syrian panels), whether realistic (date palms) or imaginary.[41] In the central and southern Levant, on the contrary, pomegranates were preferred for dress ornaments and paraphernalia of the officiating priesthood and on behalf of their association with Astarte.[42] Its popularity may have become overshadowed by that of the lotus-and-bud chains in the course of time.[43]

As pointed out by a comparison with the shrines represented on bowl no. 52 (Figure 2d), the artist decorating bowl no. 9 was not able to reproduce the trellis fringe of the aedicula's superstructure over its full length, hampered as he was by the tips of the hieracocephalic sphinxes' wings almost touching the lower part of the architrave. On no. 52 on the contrary, where smaller, human-headed sphinxes crowned with solar discs face a winged scarab on a short papyrus stalk, sufficient space was available to reproduce a complete trellis fringe (Figure 1d). Yet as to this bowl finally, it must be noted that the four shrines are separated by the motif of a cartouche with pseudo-hieroglyphs on a papyrus stalk, frequently reproduced on late ninth–eighth century BCE seals, ivories, and bowls.[44]

Textual evidence for decorated temple veils

Armed with the data aggregated in the foregoing analyses, we now feel confident to tackle a first biblical reference to the First Temple's furnishings the meaning of which finally becomes comprehensible, namely I Kings 7:13–22 (King James Version). The well-known text introduces the work carried out by the architect Hiram of Tyre in the House of the Lord. Most instructive to our paper's topic are the references to *chainwork* in our reading to understand as *between the columns' upper elements* described in verse 17 as "nets of checker work and wreaths of chain work."[45]

"**13** And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

14 He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon and wrought all his work.

15 For he cast two pillars of brass of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

16 And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits:

17 And nets of checker work (שְׂבָכִים מַעֲשֵׂה שְׂבָכָה), and wreaths of chain work (גְּדִלִים מַעֲשֵׂה שַׁרְשָׁרוֹת), for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter.

18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the network (הַשְּׂבָכָה הָאֶחָת), to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates (הָרִמֹּנִים): and so did he for the other chapiter.

19 And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

20 And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapiter.

21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar and called the name thereof Boaz.

22 And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished."

[41] Cf. Franklin 2021 with references; Mallowan and Herrmann 1974: pls. LIV, LVIII, LXIV, LXXXI.

[42] Heltzer 1996 on two inscribed eighth century BCE Phoenician jugs in the form of pomegranates and references to the biblical dress decorations; add Lemaire 1981. On the aforesaid Sidonian *naiskoi*, the pomegranate fringe of the veil is replaced by a lotus-and-bud border, with the well-attested palmette carpet pattern reminiscent of the bowls' column capitals on the sides (Gubel 1987: 38–39 nos. 3–4, pls. II–III, and cf. 39 no. 5, pl. IV) (*naiskos* fragment from Djamdjine near Tyre and the Memphite *naiskos* stela pl. X with lotus and buds).

[43] This may point to a slightly more recent date for the Sidonian naïskoi as the "decorated threshold slabs are not known to have existed in Assyria before the second half of the eighth century BCE" (Albenda 1978: 4). Modelled on woven carpets (the work of the *kāmidu* – carpet weaver), a garland border of lotus-and-bud fringes oftentimes framed these stone versions of the actual rugs embellishing the pavements of the royal quarters. It is tempting to conclude that this vogue was ushered in by the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II in the Levant, whence the original fabrics were brought back home as spoils of war, tribute and perhaps dowries as well. Famed for its richly embroidered fabrics, the Phoenician coast was for sure a plausible source, with both Arwad and Sidon specifically mentioned in association with textiles.

[44] For cartouches on papyrus stalks in combination with winged scarabs, see Avigad and Sass 1997: n°. 731 (Baalhanan), *ibidem* for other combinations: nos. 741 with the Phoenician name Yashda, 1101 (Phoenician as underscored by the "hourglass" in the hands of the standing figure, cf. nos. 1092, 1181; for the motif on bowls, see Layard 1853: 57–68.

[45] Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu (2016: 130) restitute "nets of meshwork with festoons of chainwork for the capitals that were on top of the columns."

The description of the columns and their capitals and the rows of chain work recurs in II Chronicles, 3: 15–17 (King James Version), preceded by a detailed reference to the gilt winged sphinxes in the temple's sanctum (II.10–13). Verse 14 is of the utmost interest of our contribution's topic for corroborating the aforementioned representation of fringes:

> "**10** And in the most holy house he made two *cherubim* (כְּרוּבִים) of image work and overlaid them with gold.
>
> **11** And the wings of the *cherubim* were twenty cubits long: one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub.
>
> **12** And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub.
>
> **13** The wings of these *cherubim* spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward.
>
> **14** And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought *cherubim* thereon.
>
> **15** Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapiter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.
>
> **16** And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made a hundred pomegranates and put them on the chains.
>
> **17** And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz."

It is obvious indeed that neither Nimrud bowl 9 (Figure 1a–c) nor the less detailed one numbered 52 (Figure 1d) depict a metal trellis, but the fringe of the aedicula's veil (hung on a cable as pointed out below) as the one unequivocally described in II Chron. 3,14: "And he (Solomon–if not rather his Tyrian architect Hiram) made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wove *cherubim* into it." This passage echoes the even more specific passus concerning the furnishings of the tabernacle Moses was to create in Ex. 26:31ff.:

> "Make a curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim woven into it by a skilled worker. (32) Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. (33) Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the covenant law behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place."

That the *cherubim* are indeed winged sphinxes as often suggested in analogy with the throne flanked by such hybrids behind the veil of the Solomonic temple, is now definitely corroborated by the recently published inscription on an early fifth century BCE Tyrian throne of this type: KS' KRBM ("Throne (with, flanked by winged) sphinxes" > sphinx throne).[46] The representation of Phoenician shrines on bowls N.9 and N.52 thus perfectly illustrates another passage in II Chron. 14: "He made interwoven chains and put them on top of the pillars. He also made a hundred pomegranates and attached them to the chains." The data presented here leave but little doubt about how to correctly interpret this biblical description, which has generated some puzzling proposals in the past. The passage "on top of the pillars" is indeed to be understood as referring to how the veil was fastened, not a rod clamped between the pillars' capitals and hidden from view by the garland pattern of its upper side. In the Bible, temple veils or curtains are known as *pårōket,* the veil originally covering the tabernacle and, later, the doors of the innermost part of the Solomonic temple. In a detailed study herewith recommended to all future commentators of the Qeiyafa find mentioned above, the late Pierre Bordreuil has analysed the term as *pårōket*, more specifically, a curtain or veil in Hebrew, derived from the Akkadian *pariktu*, "obstacle", referring to a barrier of sorts separating the parapet or *adyton* from the Holy of Holies (Bordreuil 2006). Evidence enlisted in a recent publication called "Penetrating the Sacred: Breaches and Barriers in the Jerusalem Temple" endorses this view (Branham 2013. Cf. also Pelletier 1958, 1979). The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* lists "curtain" as the second most frequent attestation of *pariktu*, often preceded by TUG^2, the determinative of textiles. Consequently, the blasphemy committed in the Storm God's temple of Sidon referred to in a 13th century BCE cuneiform tablet from the chancellery of king Adad-yašma' of Sidon to the ruler of Ugarit would not just point to the Sidonian temple's *adyton*, but, in "veiled terms," to the curtain as a protective obstacle very much like the *pårōket*, a barrier represented by the veil.[47] Still as to the nature of the blasphemy in question,

[46] Following Lemaire 2014; inscription on a Phoenician sphinx throne now in private hands.

[47] R.S. 86.2221+ … : Arnaud 1992 for the *editio princeps* and Bordreuil 2006: 161: "Dans ce texte, il n'est pas question à proprement parler de rideau mais de l'intérieur du sanctuaire lui-même et l'expression

one may wonder whether the text would not represent an early illustration of the asylum right granted by touching the veil of sanctuaries in more recent times.[48]

To sum up: the biblical texts regarded here as relative to the decoration of the Solomonic temple of Jerusalem refurbished by Hiram the Tyrian and, more precisely, to the curtain hiding the Holy of Holies from view, have been shown in the above lines to find pertinent parallels in the material culture of the early first millennium BCE on the Phoenician coast. Several details in the iconographic semantics of some of the bronze bowls found back in Nimrud or distributed in the eastern Mediterranean Sea indeed point to Sidon (aka the Tyro-Sidonian kingdom) as the most likely production centre. It remains, however, an open question whether the shrines reproduced represent isolated constructions in stone (which inspired baldachins used in open air ceremonies) or the passageway with the brocaded veil featuring sphinxes which separated the inner from the outer sanctum.

Excursus: Other attestations of Phoenician temple veils?

Tyrian terracotta shrine models with veils?

A terracotta shrine model bought at Akhziv (Figure 14) and a very similar one from the Tyre Al-Bass excavations (seventh–early sixth century BCE context) (Figure 15) are both characterized by what was termed a "bent plate," actually some gibbous element protruding from the shrines' interior.[49] One may wonder whether this peculiar element could not be identified as a veil (attached to a *betyl* stone in the shrine), blowing in the wind. The description of Jerusalem's Third Temple in the 2nd century BCE *Letter of Aristeas* (86) actually encourages such a train of thought:

> "The way in which the veil was installed suggested a door[way] (Θύρωσις). Especially so since the fabric was animated by a continuous movement due to the air which passed below, for the undulation started on the ground level, stirring the entire supple textile's mass until the tightly strung upper part above; a most pleasant sight and difficult to take one's eyes off indeed."[50]

Figure 14. Terracotta shrine model, Akhziv, late eighth–seventh century(?) BCE (Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority).

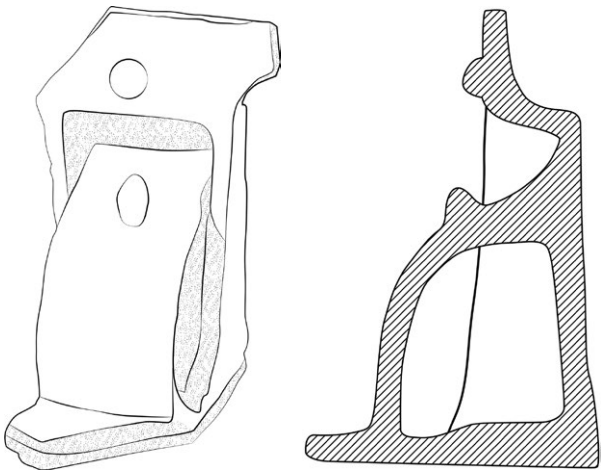


Figure 15. Terracotta shrine from Tyre al-Bass, late seventh–sixth century BCE, National Museum, Beirut (after Metzger 2004: 421, drawings readapted).

akkadienne trouve son équivalent en hébreu : ūlammibēt lappārōket 'à l'intérieur du rideau' (Nb 18,7). Le blasphème a été commis littéralement 'à l'intérieur de la clôture', ce mot pouvant désigner aussi bien l'espace clos que la clôture elle-même au sens matériel du terme..."

[48] On the asylum, see Delekat 1967 and Schlesinger 1993.

[49] See respectively Metzger 2004: 420–432, figs. 280–281 and Dayagi-Mendels 2002: 160–162, fig. 7.25 (bought *in situ* by the Akhziv excavator Ben Dor, cf. Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu 2016: 120–122). For identical betyls in *naiskoi* models (without veils) see Culican 1986, 481–486, pls. 2: A–3 A and Kletter 2015: 28–53.

[50] Translated after Pelletier 1979: 53–60.

Abbreviations used

EDPC *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Phoenician Culture*. Leuven/Paris/Bristol: Peeters.

IAA *Israel Antiquities Authority*.

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Chapter 8:
The imagery of the Neo-Assyrian seals belonging to the palace. An interpretation of the scene on a stamp seal formerly kept in the Southesk Collection

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Abstract. The following paper on the interpretation of a white chalcedony stamp seal (BM WA 2002–05–15, 1) offers a new angle on a particular aspect of Assyrian court art. In addition to the practical and symbolic role of the BM stamp seal, the paper focuses on the scene, shedding light on the manufacturing processes used in the royal workshops and on the imagery of the Sargonid period. The significance of this seal image lies not only in its decorative features but also in the fact that it allows us to study the work of the artisans, the demands of their patrons, and the role played by the Assyrian scholars in the conception of its iconography. The essence of the scene may be interpreted in light of written records of the court as well as palace life (*i.e.*, administrative practices and cultic beliefs).

Keywords: Assyrian glyptic, Assyrian queen, Esarhaddon, Išḫara, Ištar, Neo-Assyrian, sealing, Sennacherib, scorpion, stamp seal.

Modern history of stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1, "The property of a lady"[1]

It is a great pleasure to present this paper in a book honouring Tallay Ornan, a specialist in divine figures and symbols of the first millennium BCE Near Eastern iconography. The British Museum acquired a chalcedony stamp seal described as "The property of a lady" at an auction held in London on 15 May 2002.[2] Although I published this stamp seal in 2008 (Niederreiter 2008: 61 fig. 10 and 84 no. II.b.13) and a few publications about it have emerged since,[3] I would like to comment on some additional aspects. Before moving on to that, however, it is worth examining the modern history of this stamp seal, as it has already been known to research since 1908.

According to the database of the British Museum,[4] the stamp seal was sold by the widow of Howard Blackmore (1917–1999), thus revealing the identity of the previous (alleged) owner mentioned in the auction catalogue. However, the first occurrence of the stamp seal is in the catalogue of the collection of James Carnegie, the ninth Earl of Southesk (1827–1905), which provides a description and a photograph of the modern seal impression (Figure 1: I) (Carnegie 1908: vol. I, 212–213 no. O 32 and pl. XVII).

This collector and amateur pioneer of early glyptic research in the late 19th and early 20th centuries already recognized the high quality and importance of the stamp seal. As for the iconography, he noted that it is "so finely designed and engraved that Dr. [T.G.] Pinches suggests that it might have been a royal signet. I have seen nothing better of its kind. [...] though the seal itself is internally flawed and abraded round the edges of the

[1] I am very grateful to John E. Curtis and Jonathan Taylor, who allowed me to study stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1), six sealings (note 12: *a–f*, Figures 4–6) and tabloid seal amulet ND 4158 (Figure 13) in the British Museum (January 2008 and May 2010), and to Joan Aruz and Sarah Graff, who allowed me to study half-barrel-shaped bead or seal amulet HAS a62–917 (Figure 15) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in May 2016. I am also indebted to Mark W. Hamilton (Abilene Christian University), Huba Lőrincz (ELTE Budapest), Éva Varga (ELTE Budapest), and Philip Young (Warburg Institute) for their comments and linguistic suggestions. The drawings (Figures 1: III–IV, 3: I, 4: II–III, 12, 13: II and 14: I) presented in the paper are made by the author. The main results of this paper were presented in my talk "Imagery of the Neo-Assyrian seals belonging to the Palace", *Ancient Near Eastern Seals as Markers of Identity* (ANESMI), Ghent University (June 2014); then, I published the first three subsections of the present paper in *NABU* (Niederreiter 2021). Here, I present an updated version of the entire manuscript, originally meant for the conference volume, which was ultimately dropped. This research was funded by a Henri Frankfort Fellowship and Glassman Holland Research Fellowship; they supported my work on the present manuscript in the Warburg Institute (June 2014) and the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (November 2015), respectively.

[2] *Christie's. South Kensington: Antiquities. Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 May 2002* (Auction Code: ANT–9380/2) lot 288.

[3] Mitchell and Searight 2008: 102 no. 221; Radner 2008: 498 note 33; Macgregor 2012: 76; Radner 2012: esp. 687–690 figs. 1–2; Tsouparopoulou 2014: 53; May 2018: 261 fig. 5, 266, and 272–273; Lassen 2020: 36–37 fig. 3.24.

[4] Viewed 11 October 2015, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_2002-0515-1>.

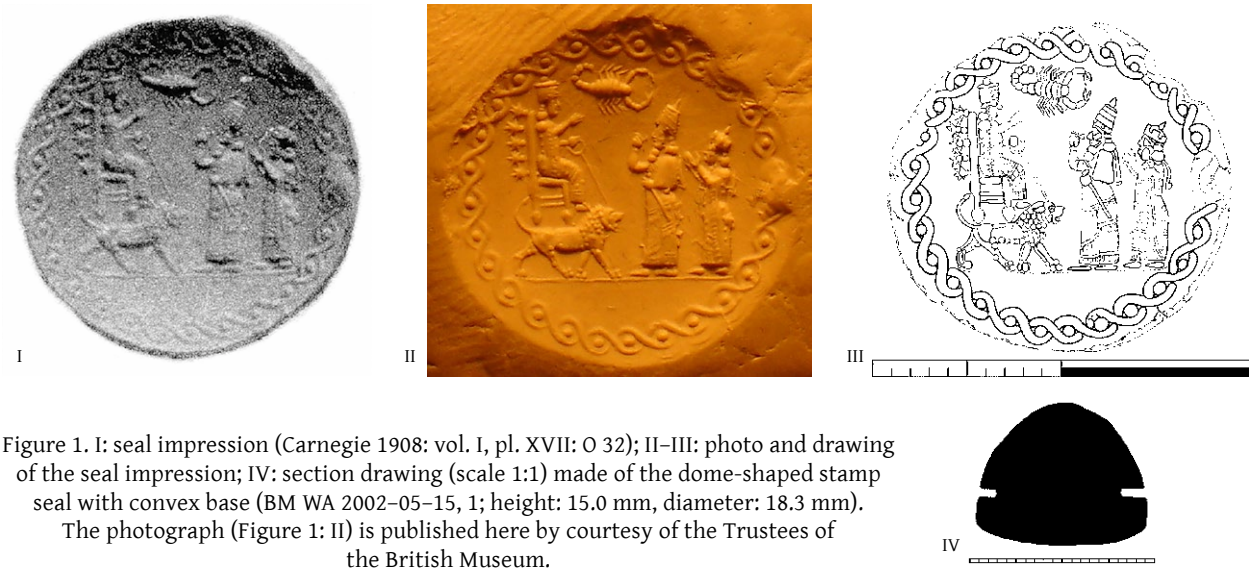

Figure 1. I: seal impression (Carnegie 1908: vol. I, pl. XVII: O 32); II–III: photo and drawing of the seal impression; IV: section drawing (scale 1:1) made of the dome-shaped stamp seal with convex base (BM WA 2002–05–15, 1; height: 15.0 mm, diameter: 18.3 mm). The photograph (Figure 1: II) is published here by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

slightly convex bezel. I very highly value this gem." According to his description, the seal depicts "ISTAR, worshipped by an Assyrian King and Queen" and the dome-shaped (*hemispherical*) stamp seal (Figure 1: IV) is "white chalcedony; lcx. [low convex] 6 × 6 [*eighths of an inch*] (flawed and slightly chipped). N.: 1900" (Carnegie 1908: vol. I, 212–213 no. O 32).

Besides the evidence drawn from the features given and the published photograph, the large chip on the guilloche border behind the standing female figure makes it clear that this stamp seal and BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1: II) are one and the same. Moreover, it is important to note that the gold wire attached to the stamp seal is, without doubt, recently applied, since the description takes no account of it. The chipped circular edge around the guilloche reveals that the object was set in an original metal mount that is now lost. Carnegie's catalogue also tells us that the seal was acquired in 1900. Although the place of acquisition and dealer or previous owner(s) of most items are mentioned, there is no more information about the provenance of this stamp seal. As for the later history of the collection, Helena M. Carnegie – who edited the manuscript for publication after her father's death in 1905 – noted in the Preface (xiv) "that sixteen of the gems comprised in the Catalogue are marked as being no longer in the collection. As, however, the majority of these have only been removed since my father's death and remain in the possession of members of his family ...".[5]

[5] The stamp seal presently under study is registered as "N", which initially concerned another group (*i.e.*, the objects belonging to "Gnosticism") in the classification presented in the Preface, which was substantially written by James Carnegie in 1899; and according to the introductory note (xii–xiii) by his daughter, Helena M. Carnegie "he had ceased to give any serious attention to Gnosticism, having – as he explains in his introductory note to Class N – lost interest in the subject."

II. The seal image

The cultic scene (Figure 1) is encircled by a dotted guilloche border, within which there is a composition of three figures with a scorpion above. The king is the central figure, and his consort is behind him, while in front of them, a goddess is seated on her throne, which is itself placed on the back of a striding lion.[6] The seal image reflects the most developed and elaborate modelled style, whose distinctive features are the figures' very fine plastic details formed with a cutting-wheel, while the anatomical and decorative elements are, in part, shaped with different-sized drills.

Based on the scene and the shaping of the figures, the stamp seal may be dated to the reign of Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) or Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE). Although the archaeological context is unknown and the object does not bear any inscription, by further study of its iconography the depicted scene can be interpreted. Moreover, the main characteristics of the seal image can be understood in the context of the practices of the Neo-Assyrian court. Regarding the posture and clothing, the king may be compared with the figures of the two kings mentioned above on the rock carvings of Maltai (Figure 2: I) and the Zincirli stele (Figure 2: II), respectively. On the Maltai relief, two figures of the king frame the divine procession, while on the main field of the Zincirli stele, although the two subjugated

[6] Contrary to my previous paper in which the drawing of the intaglio (*i.e.*, the stamp seal depiction) was shown (Niederreiter 2008: 61 fig. 10), the drawing herein (Figure 1: III) is presented as it appeared on the impressions. The positive version reflects the seal's actual use and iconographical conventions. The goddess raises her right hand in greeting and holds the leash of the lion in her left, while the king (who is depicted in the so-called *lābin appi* posture) raises a particular object towards his nose in his right hand, and the mace, his symbol of power, appears in his left, held about waist height.

Figure 2. I: "panneau B", one of the four Maltai rock carvings (Thureau-Dangin 1924: 187);* II: main depicted field of the Zincirli stele (von Luschan 1893: pl. 1).**

* Drawing of André Lespinasse (Thureau-Dangin 1924: 188 no. 1). For further research about the Maltai rock carvings, see Bachmann 1927: 23–27; Boehmer 1975: 42–84; Morandi Bonacossi 2018: 93–96; Finzi Contini 2019: 195–217; Morandi Bonacossi 2021: 54–61.
** For further bibliography about the Zincirli stele and its inscription, see Porter 2001; Leichty 2011: 181–186 no. 98.

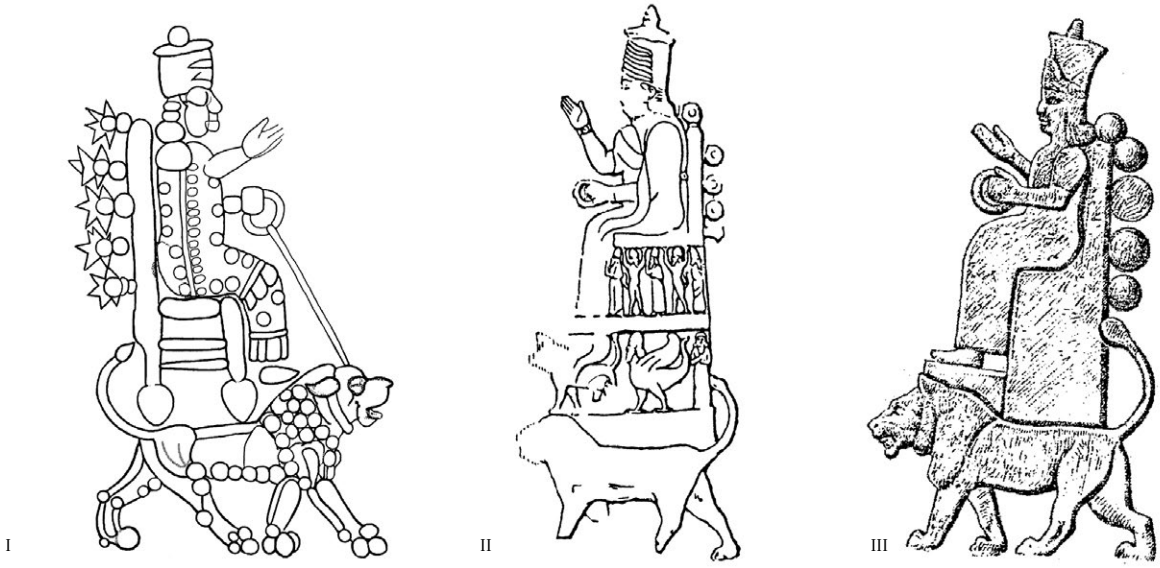

Figure 3. I: detail of inverted drawing made from stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1; II: detail from "panneau B", one of the four Maltai rock carvings (Thureau-Dangin 1924: 187, and note 7); III: detail of the Zincirli stele (VS I, pl. 7).

adversaries are in front of the king (who holds them on leashes), the royal posture and the ceremonial clothes also reveal the cultic character of the scene, since the king is in front of the divine figures and symbols situated on the upper field.

The seated goddess (Figure 3: I) can be identified as Ištar based on her attributes (the headdress, the row of stars on the back of the throne, and the striding lion). The above-mentioned rock carvings of Maltai (Figure 3: II),[7] the Zincirli stele (Figure 3: III), and a claystone relief from Assur (see Figure 11 below) provide the most important depictions of the syncretic figure of Ištar of Nineveh and Mullissu, consort of Aššur.[8] Behind the king (Figure 1), there is a third figure, that raises its hands in prayer towards the goddess. This female figure is also related to the Assyrian court. Her headdress (the mural crown),[9] the shape of which is similar to a crenellated

[7] Besides them, the Faida (or Faideh) reliefs, dated to the reign of Sennacherib or Esarhaddon, depict the same composition as the Maltai reliefs (Morandi Bonacossi 2018: esp. 94; 2021: 54–61).

[8] The identification of Mullissu's figure and the syncretism of Ištar and Mullissu based on the iconographical and textual evidence, constitute one chapter of my monograph under preparation.

[9] As for the collected examples and the studies about the headgear, see Calmeyer 1987–90: 595–596; Börker-Klähn 1997: 227–234; Ornan 2002: 474–477; Meinhold 2009: 240–242; Gansell 2018a: 68 and 89;

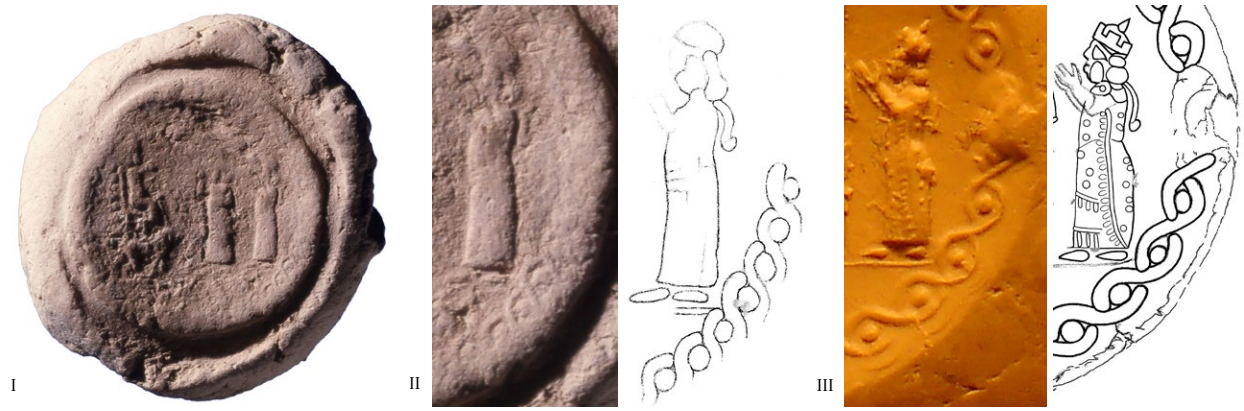

Figure 4. BM WA 84671 sealing (see footnote 12: *a*). I: photograph* and its details (II) *versus* details (III) of BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 stamp seal (see Figure 1). The photographs are published here by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

* For the same photograph, see Reade 1987: 145 fig. 7; Ornan 2002: 461: D and 463 fig. 5a.3 (the sealing is designated incorrectly as 84871).

wall, and her clothing, on which there are decorated rosettes marked by drill-holes, identify her as one of the royal consorts. Figures with similar attributes are known from Sargonid art.[10] The textual evidence allows us to identify the queens among the members of the royal households or domestic quarters.[11] On the field of the stamp seal, a scorpion appears above Ištar in the cultic scene.

The presence of the royal couple and the homage paid to Ištar, as well as the high quality of the depiction, make the importance of this stamp seal evident, at the same time indicating that its owner was of high status. For further study of the subject, the following subsection will present a group of contemporary stamp seal impressions from Assur and Nineveh.

Reconstruction of a group based on the comparison of sealings (along with questions about their dates and owners)

During the excavations in Nineveh, Austin Henry Layard discovered six sealings (*a*–*f*), and Walter Andrae found another (*g*) in Assur, whose sealed depictions[12] are connected with the aforementioned cultic scene (Figure 1). These sealings were used as identity markers of the properties and activities of the owners of the stamp seals.[13]

Based on divine depictions, we can identify two types of Ištar figures with several salient differences, and hence two types of seal images. Although both types of the goddess are depicted on the back of a striding lion, one is sitting on her throne (see footnote 12: *a*, Figure 4: I, as on the stamp seal Figure 1), whereas the other is represented in a standing position (see footnote 12: *b*–*g*,

May 2018: 259–263. In the case of the stamp seal in question, it is interesting to note the cone-shaped element situated at the top of her head, which is also attested among the collected sealings depicting the royal consort (see footnote 12), on four examples (*b*–*e*) (e.g. Figure 5).

[10] As for recent studies with further bibliography about these depictions, see Ornan 2002: 461–464; Macgregor 2012: 87–93 and 109–118; Svärd 2015: 74–80; Gansell 2018a: 67–91; 2018b: 160–174; May 2018: 259–263.

[11] For different female figures in the Neo-Assyrian court and their identification based mainly on the textual evidence, see Parpola 1988: 73–76; Melville 2004: 37–57; Teppo [Svärd] 2007a: 387–402; 2007b: 263–268; Svärd and Luukko 2009: 279–294; Macgregor 2012: esp. 55–73; Parpola 2012: 613–622; Svärd 2015: esp. 39–74.

[12] The following summary presents the bibliographical references on the seven clay sealings (*a*–*g*):
(*a*): BM WA 84671 (51–9–2, 190): Reade 1987: 145 fig. 7; Herbordt 1992: 138 and pl. 32: 3; Ornan 2002: 461: D and 463 fig. 5a.3 (the sealing is designated incorrectly as 84871); Mitchell and Searight 2008: 102 no. 221; Niederreiter 2008: 84 no. II.b.12; Radner 2008: 498–499 no. A.4.2 (fig. 14); Macgregor 2012: 76; Radner 2012: esp. 688–689 fig. 3.
(*b*): BM WA 84789 (51–9–2, 313): Reade 1987: 144–145 fig. 5; Herbordt 1992: 137–138 and pl. 32: 5; Herbordt 1997: 282 pl. 26 (fig. 6): 9; Ornan 2002: 461: D and 463 fig. 5a.1; Galter 2007: 651; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 103 no. 223: a; Niederreiter 2008: 83 no. II.b.6; Radner 2008: 497–498 no. A.3.1 (fig. 9); Macgregor 2012: 76 fig. 12.
(*c*): BM WA 84802 (51–9–2, 349): Layard 1853a: 7 no. 16 and pl. 69: 16; Reade 1987: 144–145 fig. 6; Herbordt 1992: 137–138 and pl. 32: 4; Ornan 2002: 461: D and 463 fig. 5a.2; Galter 2007: 651; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 103 no. 223: b–c; Niederreiter 2008: 83 no. II.b.7; Radner 2008: 497–498 no. A.3.2 (fig. 11!); Macgregor 2012: 76.
(*d*): BM WA 84553 (51–9–2, 71): Layard 1853a: 7 no. 6 and pl. 69: 6; Layard 1853*b*: 154 no. 1; Herbordt 1992: 138 note 50; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 103 no. 222; Niederreiter 2008: 83 no. II.b.8; Radner 2008: 499 no. A.4.3 (fig. 15); Radner 2012: esp. 689 fig. 4.
(*e*): BM WA 50781 (82–3–23, 1773): Mitchell and Searight 2008: 103 no. 224; Niederreiter 2008: 83 no. II.b.9; Radner 2008: 497–498 no. A.3.3 (fig. 10!); Macgregor 2012: 76.
(*f*): K 348 + Ki 1904–10–9, 246 (BM WA 99214): ADD I: 490 no. 635; Postgate 1970: 154 no. 20, pl. XXVIII: 20 and pl. XXI: *d*; Fales and Postgate 1992: 108 no. 94; Herbordt 1992: 252 no. Ninive 203 and pl. 14: 13; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 46–47 no. 44; Niederreiter 2008: 83–84 no. II.b.11; Radner 2008: 498–499 no. A.4.1 (fig. 13: a–b); Macgregor 2012: 76; Radner 2012: esp. 689 fig. 5.
(*g*): Ass 18956 (VA Ass 4276): Klengel-Brandt 1994: 147–149 and pl. XV: a; Ornan 2001: 244–245 fig. 9.13; 2002: 461: D and 463 fig. 5b; Galter 2007: 651 and 671 fig. 5; Niederreiter 2008: 83 no. II.b.10.

[13] Besides written documents, sealings were used to close locking devices or diverse containers (ceramic vessels, wooden boxes, or reed baskets) (Herbordt 1992: 279–281; 1997: 55–70).

Figure 5. BM WA 84553 sealing (see footnote 12: *d*): I (Layard 1853a: pl. 69: 6) and II (photographs). The photographs (Figure 5: II) are published here by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 6. K 348 + Ki 1904–10–9, 246 (BM WA 99214) textile docket (see footnote 12: *f*): I: obverse and II: reverse (photographs). The photographs are published here by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

e.g. Figure 5). As with the first type, the stars constitute the main characteristic of this figure, whose body is encircled by them as a *nimbus*. This image of Ištar can be compared to another type, namely, Ištar of Arbela, who is named after her cultic centre on the evidence provided by the stele of Til Barsip.[14]

Among the collected clay sealings, the textile docket (Figure 6) constitutes the only textual evidence that enables us to precisely date and identify its sphere of application. Its inscription mentions a certain quantity and quality of textiles, reserved for transport or storage, and is dated to the month of Kislev (IX), eponym year of Nabû-aḫḫē-ēreš (681 BCE), during the reign of Sennacherib.[15]

As for the connection between stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1) and the sealings, as well as the identification of the owner of the stamp seal, Karen Radner noted (based on Dominique Collon's direct observation of the material) in her publication of 2008 that "BM 84671 [(Figure 4: I)] is certainly an impression produced with this seal [BM WA 2002–05–15, 1], and this is also likely in the case of K 348+ [textile docket (Figure 6)], although the poor quality of the two impressions on that docket make it impossible to be absolutely certain" (Radner 2008: 498 note 33). In her publication "The Seal of Tašmetum-šarrat, Sennacherib's Queen, and Its Impressions" (2012), she mentions that, besides them, the seal impression of BM WA 84553 (Figure 5) was also made with the same stamp seal (Radner 2012: esp. 688–690). Moreover, she concluded that the dated textile docket (Figure 6) was sealed with Tašmētu-šarrat's stamp seal, which is stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1).

As regards this interpretation, I agree that the textile docket was sealed with the stamp seal of a royal consort (who could have been Tašmētu-šarrat) based on the date. However, I have to reject the identification of the

[14] The votive inscription on the stele names the goddess (lines 1–2): "For Ištar, who lives in Arbela, his lady ..." (Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: 156–157 no. 4 and pl. XIV: 1; Radner 2006: esp. 186). As for the image of Ištar of Arbela, see Dezsö and Curtis 1991: 107–110; Ornan 2001: 240–243; Cornelius 2009: 19–24 and 32 fig. 3.

[15] Fales and Postgate 1992: 108 no. 94. For the date of the textile docket and its connection to the reign of Sennacherib, see Radner 2008: 498–499 no. [A.4.1]; Radner 2012: 689–690 fig. 5.

aforementioned three sealings (see footnote 12: *a*, *d*, *f*, Figures 4–6) as impressions made using stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1). The identification of Tašmētu-šarrat as the owner of stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 also seems questionable, due to the lack of conclusive iconographical and textual sources.

Concerning the connection between stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 and the three sealings Figures 4–6), the following remarks are worth making:

BM WA 84671 (see footnote 12: a Figure 4: I): Although this sealing shows the same iconography and attests the same characteristics as stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1), including the dotted guilloche border, this repetitive and well-executed regular pattern, within which appears the cultic scene, allows us to distinguish these two seal images from each other (Figure 1 *versus* Figure 4: I). While most of the guilloche border is very faint or completely effaced around the scene on the BM WA 84671 impression, there are two recognisable details of the guilloche design. One is located behind the seated divine figure, while the other is behind the standing female figure's lower body and below her feet. By comparing the latter (Figure 4: II) – which is clearly visible in the published photographs (see footnote 12) – with the guilloche on the impression of stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 4: III), we can conclude that the arrangements of overlapping curved bands are represented in opposite directions relative to each other. In other words, these regular patterns encircling the scenes are engraved differently on each of the two seal depictions. Moreover, regarding the number of segments (*i.e.*, overlapping curved bands around the central dots) of the two guilloche borders, we can note that the guilloche border on the sealing consists of more elements (overlapping spirals and drilled holes) than the one on stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (as visible in the photographs and drawings: Figure 4: II *versus* III).

BM WA 84553 (see footnote 12: *d*, Figure 5): Contrary to the latter sealing (Figure 4: I), the standing figure of Ištar is depicted on this seal (Figure 5). Her silhouette and the globe-tipped elements representing the radiance of the stars that encircle her upper body – which is clearly visible on the drawing (Figure 5: I) published by Layard with the following description "... a deity standing on a lion, and surrounded by seven stars" (Layard 1853b: 154 no. 1)[16] – prove that we have to reject the possibility that the goddess is depicted in a sitting position.

K 348 + Ki 1904–10–9 (see footnote 12: *f*, Figure 6): In the case of the dated textile docket, which constitutes the focal point of the suggested interpretation, the seal impressions (see obverse and reverse in Figure 6: I–II) are of "poor quality"; nevertheless, the goddess seems to be the standing figure of Ištar based on her silhouette, proportions, and arrangement in relation to the striding lion (Figure 6: I). There is no trace of a throne or indication of a seated position; however, the upright longitudinal silhouette of her lower body, as well as the oval-shaped form designating the *nimbus* around her upper body, do allow us to recognise the standing figure of the goddess.[17]

As for the collected sealings, the use of seven different stamp seals (see footnote 12: *a–g*) belonging to the reconstructed group may be identified. Among them, one of the seals depicts the seated divine figure (Figure 4: I); however, it was not sealed with stamp seal BM WA 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1). There is also a sealed textile docket (Figure 6) which is dated to the last year of Sennacherib (when Tašmētu-šarrat was queen). We can conclude that these sealings were made with the stamp seals of royal consorts; however, linking them to any of the known queens[18] is problematic due to the lack of inscriptions on them and the high number of different seals.

Regarding chronology, the items of this group seem to have been made and used during the reigns of Sennacherib and of Esarhaddon. There are two similar stamp seals known based on seal impressions dated to the reign of Sargon II (721–705 BCE) (see below, Figure 9), which may constitute the predecessors of the reconstructed group. Also, the use of these stamp seals after the reign of Esarhaddon is questionable, due to lack of evidence. Nevertheless, it is possible that at least some of the seal impressions studied in this paper were made with personal stamp seals of the consorts of Ashurbanipal (668–c. 631 BCE) or his successors.

Although the stamp seals themselves have been lost except for BM WA 2002–05–15, 1, we can conclude that they follow the same iconographical conventions in their scenes, applied technologies, and artistic level. Apart from the two types of Ištar, which can be identified on them, the structural principles of the scenes, the framing dotted-guilloche borders (when recognisable), and the arrangement and characteristics of the figures, exhibit similarities. These stamp seals have consistently copied compositions, a fact which demonstrates that they were manufactured in series and in workshops under central control.

[16] For another drawing, see Mitchell and Searight 2008: 103 no. 222.

[17] On the published drawings of the seal depiction, the silhouette of a standing figure on the striding lion is visible, with the following descriptions: "Zwei menschliche Figuren (Beter?) stehen vor einem Löwen(?), der auf dem Rücken Symbol(e) trägt. Nur der Kugelpfeiler ist erkennbar." (Herbordt 1992: 252 no. Ninive 203 and pl. 14: 13) and "Two worshippers to left facing symbol on the back of a lion." (Mitchell and Searight 2008: 46 no. 44).

[18] As for the lists of identified Neo-Assyrian queens based on written sources, see Melville 2004: 44: table 1; Teppo [Svärd] 2007a: 388: table I; Macgregor 2012: 3; Kertai 2013; Svärd 2015: 48: table 2.

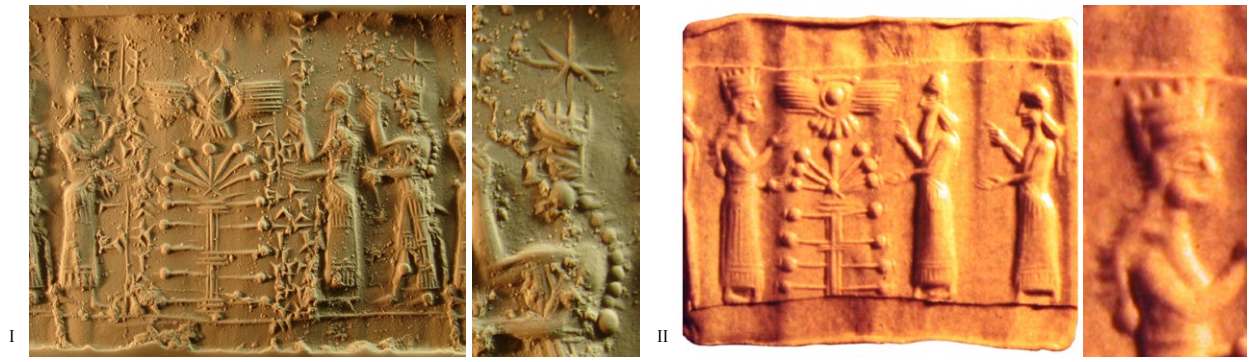

Figure 7. I: modern impression made of Ash. 1932.319 cylinder seal (see footnote 21: *c*) (based on Niederreiter 2015: 140 no. 6); II: modern impression made of ND 1989.332 (IM 115642) cylinder seal (see footnote 23). The photograph (Figure 7: II) is published here by permission of late Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr.

Manufacture of the seal images in light of the sources belonging to the royal court

As for the making of seal images, there emerges the question of the use of models which might confirm the influence or copying of so-called large-scale art. The stelae and rock carvings of the Sargonid period could have served as patterns of the seal depictions. However, it is important to note that, in the case of large-scale art, the king is the central or only figure in the cultic scenes. When he appears in them with a god, a divine couple or divine procession, he is depicted without his entourage.[19] The ruler (who is the provider for the gods and responsible for their rites and ceremonies) pays homage as a mediator in front of the divine figures and symbols. These royal effigies are known from stelae erected in palaces, temples, or city gates, as well as from rock carvings.[20]

Studying the composition, it is worth noting that the single figures seem to have been shaped with the help of pattern books following iconographical conventions. Among the figures selected and combined according to the chosen theme, the king and the two types of Ištar show the characteristics of the canonised figures; however, the female figure and the scorpion do not appear in monumental art.

As for the depiction of anthropomorphic divine figures and royal figures with one of their attendants in cultic or ritual scenes, the so-called eunuch seals provide three examples from the reign of Adad-nērārī III (810–783 BCE) (Figure 7: I).[21] Concerning the depiction of an Assyrian queen in the corpus of the Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals, there is in recent research only one attempt to identify the female figure as a queen.[22] The object in question (ND 1989.332 – IM 115642 cylinder seal, Figure 7: II),[23] discovered in Coffin 2 of Tomb III shows a female figure facing a stylised tree below a winged sun-disc on the other side of which stands a king and a eunuch, the latter likely the seal owner. However, the female figure in question does not wear a mural crown (the main attribute of the representations of Neo-Assyrian queens); instead, she has a horned headdress of which the upper part comprises a row of

[19] The Gisgis (Kesentaş) relief, engraved in Neo-Assyrian provincial style, provides an exception. This rock carving, located in the Upper Tigris region, 70 km from Amedi (Diyarbakır), depicts a cultic scene in which there is a eunuch behind the king facing a winged sun-disc standard placed on a bull, a crescent moon standard placed on a hybrid creature, and Ištar standing on a striding lion (Köroğlu 2018: 192–197, figs. 19a–b). For another notable exception, see fig. 10 below.

[20] Grayson and Ruby 1997: 90; Grayson and Novotny 2014: 217: Sennacherib 157.

[21] The following three examples are known to us in which one or two royal figures with a eunuch, the seal-owner, are depicted:
(a): Ash. 1922.61 (formerly in the collection of the late Reverend T.R. Hodgson [bought in Sulaymānīyah]; "agate", height: 35.6 mm, diameter: 16.0 mm): Niederreiter 2015: esp. 139 no. 4 (with further bibliography) – the seal legend: "Cylinder seal of Nabû-šarru-uṣur, the eunuch of Adad-nērārī (III).";
(b): ND 1989.333 – IM 115643 (Kalḫu, North-West Palace: Tomb III, Coffin 2; "lapis lazuli", height: 53 mm, diameter: 17 mm [height includes upper and lower gold mounts]): Niederreiter 2015: esp. 137–138 no. 2 (with further bibliography); Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 34, 127, and pl. 133f – the seal legend: "Cylinder seal of Ninurta-idīia-šukšid, the eunuch of Adad-nērārī (III), king of Assyria, chief of the cooks (and) herdsmen.";
(c): Ash. 1932.319 (Kish, Temple Mound; "lapis lazuli", height: 48.5 mm, diameter: 18.5 mm): Niederreiter 2015: esp. 140–141 no. 6 (with further bibliography) – the seal legend: "To the goddess Gula, his mistress, for the life of Adad-nērārī (III), king of Assyria, Pān-Aššūr-lāmur, governor of the city Assur, offered (this cylinder seal) (also) for his own life."

[22] The first publication dealing with the object mentions the crown of the figure without its identification (Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 297 Pic. 181), and then Lamia al-Gailani Werr identified the figure as a goddess (al-Gailani Werr 2008: 161). However, the recent publications (Reade 2009: 253–254 fig. 14; Hussein – Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 33; Gansell 2018a: 83 fig. 15; Lassen 2020: 35–36 fig. 3.22; May 2020: 71–72) describe the figure as a Neo-Assyrian queen, because they identify her headdress with a mural crown.

[23] ND 1989.332 – IM 115642 (cornelian with upper and lower gold mounts, the top one provided with a suspension loop, height: 41 mm, diameter: 15 mm): Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 297 Pic. (181); al-Gailani Werr 2008: 161 fig. 19-w; Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 33, 127 and pl. 133e.

feathers, which makes it evident that she is a goddess and not a queen.[24]

In Neo-Assyrian glyptic, the gold stamp seal ring of Hamâ, queen of Shalmaneser IV (782–773 BCE) and daughter-in-law of Adad-nērārī III, provides the earliest known depiction of an Assyrian queen (Figure 8). In this cultic scene, encircled by the dotted guilloche border, the seal owner appears in front of Gula, who is seated on her throne, which is placed on the back of a crouching dog. Behind her throne, there is a scorpion. Beside the dog, the scalpel held in her raised hand makes the identification of the goddess with Gula clear.[25] In view of the structural principle (*i.e.*, the arrangement of the figures), we consider the aforementioned eunuch seals as forerunners in which the owners of the seals are depicted with the king as a privilege. On the other hand, Hamâ's seal, depicting the queen facing Gula and a scorpion in a cultic scene encircled by a dotted guilloche border, can be taken as a precursor to the object studied here, though it depicts Ištar instead of Gula and although the king is also present in the scene.

As for the depiction of the royal couple in front of divine figures from the art of the Sargonid period, there are two identified seal images known from stamp seal impressions[26] dated to the reign of Sargon II, Sennacherib's predecessor (Figure 9: I–II). They were discovered in Room HH[27] of the North-West Palace in Kalḫu. Sharing the same composition, they depict the king and his consort in front of two standing divine figures. The first one is a god (Adad or Aššur) on a bull, while the second one is Ištar on a striding lion, the faint figure of a scorpion recognisable above her.[28]

The standing figure of the god is absent from stamp seal BM 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1) and the collected seal impressions (see footnote 12: *a*–*g*); however, the structural arrangement of the figures (*i.e.*, the cultic

Figure 8. ND 1989.334 (IM 115644) gold stamp seal ring (see footnote 37) (based on Lassen 2020: 36 fig. 3.23/ Photography by Ssgt Noreen L. Feeney, 318th Public Affairs Operation Center (PAOC), US Army, Baghdad, 2003).

I

II

Figure 9. Two sealings, ND 807 (IM 56873) (I) and ND 1106(a) (II), from Room HH of the North-West Palace (based on Postgate 1973: pl. 97 *k* and *j*). The photographs are published here by courtesy of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq (Gertrude Bell Memorial).

[24] See the object referenced in footnote 21, 3rd item, showing a similar composition in which the female figure stands behind the king. Even if we considered the star to be separated from the figure, the horned headdress with a row of feathers on top would still indicate her divine character (Figure 1).

[25] For Gula's iconography, see Collon 1994; Collon 2001: 122–126; Ornan 2004.

[26] Among the four sealings, there are two identified seals: ND 807 and ND 1106(a–c):
– ND 807 (IM 56873): Parker 1955: 114 and pl. XXII: 5 (the find is designated as ND. 808); Postgate 1973: 235–236 no. 257 (date: 16–01–716 BCE), 252, pls. 86: 257 and 97: *k*; Niederreiter 2008: 33 no. II.b.5;
– ND 1106(a) (IM): Postgate 1973: 236–237 no. 260 (date: [...]–04–[...] BCE), 252, pls. 86: 260 and 97: *j*; Niederreiter 2008: 33 no. II.b.2;
– ND 1106(b) (IM): Postgate 1973: 237 no. 261 (date: ...–04–719 BCE), 252, pls. 86: 261 and 97: *i*; Niederreiter 2008: 33 no. II.b.3;
– ND 1106(c) (IM): Postgate 1973: 237 no. 262 and 252; Niederreiter 2008: 33 no. II.b.4.

[27] As for the "Bitanu or Harem" (private domestic quarters) including Room HH, see Oates and Oates 2001: 61–68.

[28] Postgate 1973: 252 no. 260 (and "on the unillustrated part of No. 261"), pl. 97: 257 and 260; Herbordt 1992: 201 no. Nimrūd 116 and pl. 32: 2.

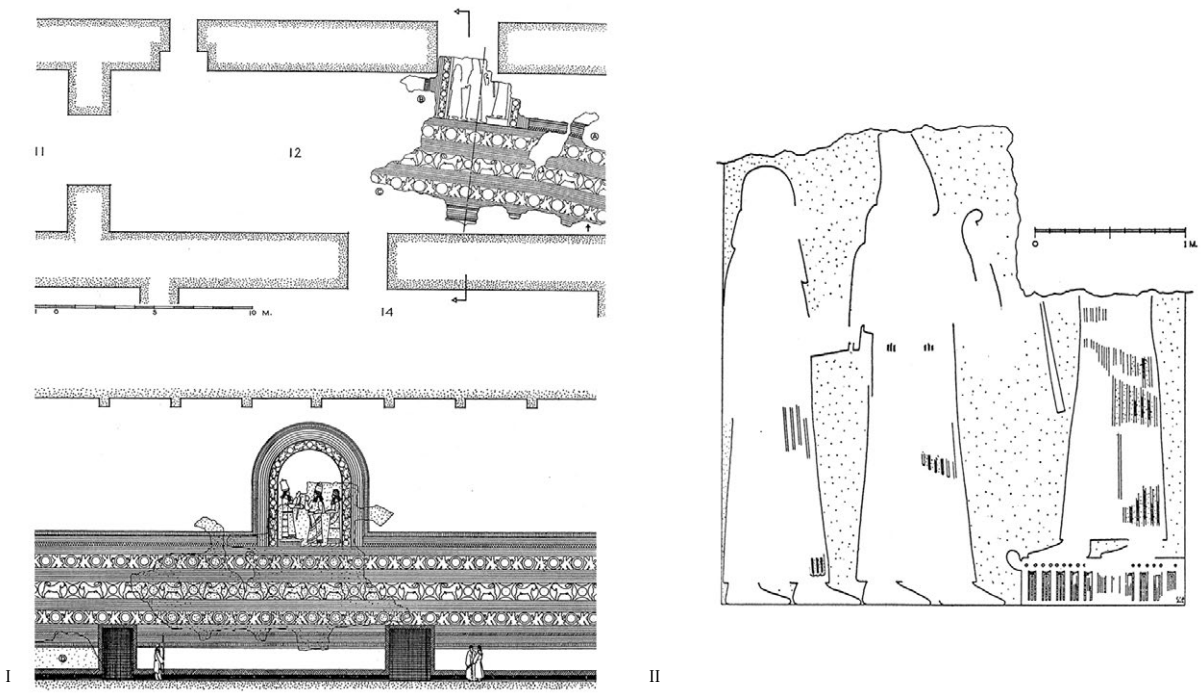

Figure 10. Wall painting in the K-residence (Room 12) at Dūr-Šarrukīn: I: "recovery" [above] and "restoration" [below] (based on Loud and Altman 1938: pl. 88); II: "Existing Remains of the Heroid-sized Triad" (based on Loud and Altman 1938: 85 fig. 12).

scene of the royal couple in front of the sitting or standing goddess), including the scorpion, appear on them. The two seal images dated back to the reign of Sargon II may be considered to be their predecessors. According to currently available knowledge, these are the first Neo-Assyrian examples in which a royal consort appears behind the king in front of divinities in a cultic scene.

Among contemporary large-scale depictions, there is an interesting exception to the rule, when a royal subject could be depicted with the king in front of a divine statue standing on a cultic podium (Figure 10). Although this mural painting exhibits the style of the court, it belongs to a particular sphere in terms of its physical location, since this image comes from the K-residence built on the artificial terrace of Dūr-Šarrukīn, in the shadow of the royal palace; that is, the residence and the art within it reflect the aspirations of Assyrian elites. This wall painting depicts Sargon II standing between the god and the royal subject, the lord of this monumental building, who plays a prominent role in this cultic scene.

In Neo-Assyrian court art, these examples show, on the one hand, that single figures (royal consorts or dignitaries) could appear behind the king and in front of deities. On the other hand, these depictions were destined for a particular sphere of the court. As for these images, we can speak of the production of the royal workshops in which copies of required figures, were produced according to the scene that was chosen. By reconstructing this process, textual evidence reveals that in this system, besides the work of the artisans and the demand of the patrons, the scholars of the court also played a decisive role. They participated in the elaboration of the design, that is, the choice of inscriptions accompanying images or overall planning of figures. Moreover, they could be responsible for new creations, since they designed, controlled, and acted as mediators between the centre (*i.e.*, the king) and the workshops.

There is a cuneiform tablet (Sm 1893) dating from the reign of Sennacherib, which contains two textual variants designed to be engraved on cylindrical beads.

> "You [*will write*] as follows upon the small seal-shaped pearl that [...]: (obv.1–2)
>
> Palace (ᶜKURᶜ) of Sennacherib, king of As[syria]: (3) ... (4–8)
>
> Palace (ᶜÉᶜ.GAL) of Sennacherib, ki[ng of Assyria]: (rev.1) ... (2–7)"

Based on the translation of A. K. Grayson and J. Novotny.[29]

These texts were samples for royal properties, while another cuneiform tablet (K 6177 + 8869) deals with the depiction of Aššur (Anšar) with the "Tablet of Destinies" in front of Sennacherib. According to this text, the king's position is defined, as well as that of the main god's detailed effigy.[30] The final destination of the planned depiction is questionable; however, the text describes this in detail.

"The Tablet of Destinies, ... (1–5) which Aššur, king of the gods, took in his hand and held [at his breast] (6) – a representation of his form, the replica of his proper appearance, [(is depicted)] on it: (7)

he grasps [in his] hand the leashes of the great heavens, the bond of the [Igigi] and Anunnaki. (8–9)

[In] front of the representation of Aššur, his lord, he (Sennacherib) stood a representation of Sennacherib, king of the entire world, king of [Assyria], who fashioned the images of Aššur, Anu, Sîn, Šamaš, Adad, Bēlet-ilī and Ištar of the Bīt Kitmuri temple, the shepherd who makes humble obeisance, the agent of Aššur, his lord. (10–15) ..."

Based on the translation of A.R. George.[31]

In a letter (K 1268 + Sm 488) dated to the reign of Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal, Nabû-ašarēd reports to the king about the preparation of a royal effigy. The sender mentions that it was not formed according to his prescriptions or the outlined sample. On the basis of the problems and divergences from the modelling described therein, it is clear that there was a well-established pattern for the royal effigy. The sender of the letter was apparently not a sculptor; however, this literate person was able to draw a royal image, since he was aware of the iconographical conventions enabling him to play an intermediary role between the king (the administrative centre) and the artisans (the royal workshops).

"[To] the king, my lord: y[our servant], Nabû-ašarēd. (obv.1–2) ...(3–4)

[Concerning] what the king [as]ked me: (5–6) ... (7–10)

We have now sent two ro[yal im]ages to the king. I myself sketched the royal image which is an *outline*. They fashioned the royal image which is *in the round*. The king should examine them, and whichever the king finds acceptable we will execute accordingly.(11–20) ...(e.21–obv.1)

As for the royal image which they are making, the scepter is lying across his arm and his arm is resting on his thighs. I myself do not agree with this and I will not fashion (it so). I could speak with them about features – about anything whatever – but they wouldn't listen to me.(2–11)... (12–14)

[...]. I myself should fashion the [bod]y, [but] they [do not a]gree.(15–17)"

Based on the translation of S.W. Cole and P. Machinist.[32]

We know of only a few depictions, such as a fossil claystone relief (Figure 11)[33] discovered in Assur, in which similar structural composition and figures appear. On this fragmentary relief, there are three figures: the king, the main god Aššur (Anšar), and the syncretic figure of Ištar and Mullissu, who is sitting on her throne. This is an item of exceptionally high quality in terms of its elaborate details and artistic execution (its preserved maximum height is 23–24 cm).[34] Based on these features, the question emerges whether it was a model, as its quality and elaboration clearly demonstrate that it was suitable for copying.[35]

The studied seal image also verifies a methodically considered scene in which the central role of the king is evident; however, the female figure and the scorpion reveal the *raison d'être* of the stamp seals. Stamp

[29] Grayson and Ruby 1997: 90; Grayson and Novotny 2014: 217: Sennacherib 157.

[30] The lower half of the tablet (George 1986: 135 fig. 1), which might have contained the depiction, is broken away.

[31] George 1986: 133–144: *Text B*; Grayson and Novotny 2014: 218–220: Sennacherib 158; Fales 2015: 554.

[32] Cole and Machinist 1998: 36–37 no. 34. For the image of the royal figure and the term *ṣalam šarrūtiya*, see Nadali 2012: esp. 586–587.

[33] According to W. Andrae, the relief was made "aus fossilem Tonstein" (Andrae 1938: pl. 74 b; Andrae 19772: 233 fig. 210), while, as for the material and its use, it is important to note that the plaque, which depicts the king killing a lion from Nineveh, is identified as "fine-grained fossil clay of the kind also used for tablets in the royal libraries" (Reade 1995: 97 no. 41) and "fine fossil clay" (Reade 2001/2002: 152 fig. 11).

[34] Moortgat 1967: 157 and pl. 281; Andrae 19772: 233 fig. 210.

[35] There is a similar relief from Assur (Andrae 1938: 159 and pl. 74a; Moortgat 1967: pl. 280) and one from Nineveh (Barnett 1976: 35 and pl. 1; Reade 1995: 97 no. 41). W. Bachmann identified the relief in question at present as a "Tonmodellrelief" (Bachmann 1927: 12–13), and W. Andrae and A. Moortgat as a "Bildhauermodell" (Andrae 1938: 159 and pl. 74 b; Andrae 19772: 230: "In die Zeit des Sanherib gehören, wie wir glauben, zwei auf weichem Tonstein geschnittene, zarte Bildhauermodelle zu großen Felsreliefs."; Moortgat 1967: 157, pl. 281). B. Hrouda rejected this identification: "Wohl keine Bildhauermodelle, dafür sind sie zu gut und mit allen Einzelheiten ausgeführt. [Hrsg.])" (Andrae 19772: 313 Anm. 208) and, following him, in his article about "sculptors' models" kept in the British Museum, J.E. Reade comments about the studied object and another one from Assur based on their depictions: "Both subjects might have been suitable for dedication in shrines" (Reade 2001/2002: 152).

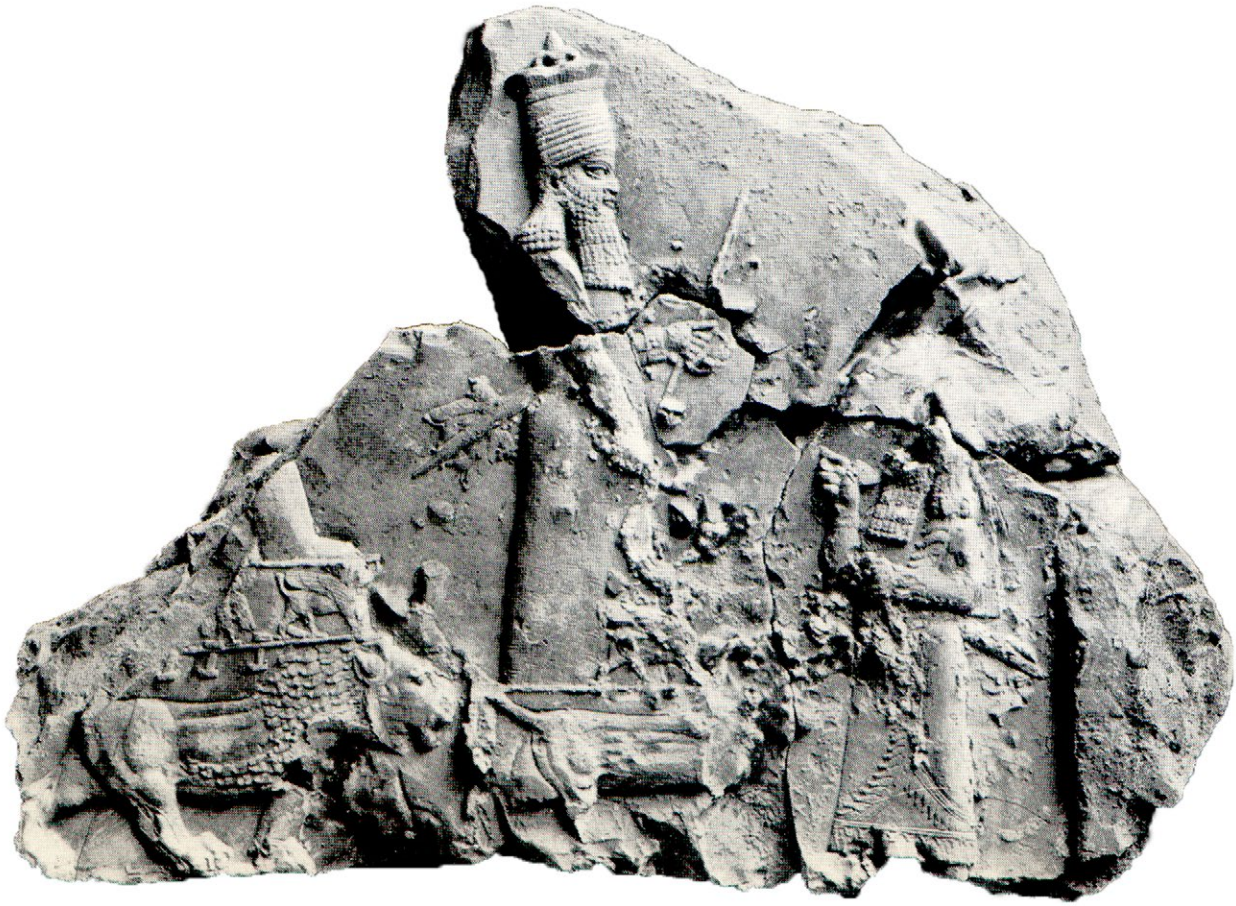

Figure 11. Fragmented fossil claystone relief from Assur (based on Moortgat 1967: pl. 281).*
*Bachmann 1927: 12 fig. 11; Andrae 1938: pl. 74 b; Moortgat 1967: pl. 281; Andrae 1977²: 233 fig. 210.

seals with the same imagery played a decisive role at court, since they could be connected to the palace and cultic sphere. The identical scheme of these high-quality items has a (complex) meaning which can be interpreted in the light of literary and court sources, as well as the finds discovered in the palaces.

V. The scorpion (symbol of Išḫara) used as an emblem in the palace[36]

Scorpions indicate a connection to the domestic quarters belonging to the palace and royal households, as well as their members. The scorpions chosen to serve as an emblem appear on several personal objects for practical reasons, since they marked the properties and designated administrative and economic activities of this interior sphere of the palace.

Besides the scorpion, some of these objects also bear an inscription indicating who their owners were. According to their inscriptions, these objects belonged to royal consorts, that is, queens, who are literally referred to as "woman of the palace" (MÍ–É.GAL).

Gold stamp seal ring (ND 1989.334 – IM 115644, Figure 8)[37] North-West Palace, Tomb III, Coffin 2 (Kalḫu):

> "Property of Hamâ, queen of Shalmaneser (IV), king of Assyria, daughter-in-law of Adad-nērārī (III)."

[36] Since the subject of the present subsection is well known in recent research (Galter 2007: esp. 648–652; Radner 2008: 494–502: 3.2; Macgregor 2012: 73–77; Radner 2012: esp. 690–693; Svärd 2015: esp. 74–75), we focus here only on the presentation of the main sources with citations of their primary publications. As for the objects bearing the figure of a scorpion, my previous article (Niederreiter 2008: 59–62 and 82–84) contains the main information and further bibliographical references about the sources under study here.

[37] Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 122 and Pic. 183; al-Gailani Werr 2008: 155–156 fig. 19-d; al-Rawi 2008: 136: text no. 16 and fig. 15–u; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.1; Hussein – Altaweel – Gibson 2016: 33, 127 (gold, height: 40 mm, diameter: 32 mm, weight: 130.5 g) and pl. 133a; Spurrier 2017, 155–158 (figs. 6–8) and 165; Gansell 2018a: 82–83 figs. 13–14; Lassen 2020: 36 fig. 3.23.

Gold bowl (ND 1989.4 – IM 105695)[38] North-West Palace, Tomb II, sarcophagus (Kalḫu):

> "Property of Atalia, queen of Sargon (II), king of Assyria."

Electrum mirror (ND 1989.194 – IM 115468)[39] North-West Palace, Tomb II, sarcophagus (Kalḫu):

> "Property of Atalia, queen(1) of Sargon (II), king of Assyria.(2)"

Two alabaster amphorae (Ass 185 – VA Ass 2255)[40] and (Ass 218+219 – EŞ 4622 or EŞ 6622)[41] Palace of Ashurnasirpal II (Assur):

> "Property of Tašmētu-šarrat, queen(1) of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.(2)"

> "Property of Tašmētu-šarrat, queen of Sennacherib, king of Assyria."

Coffin 1 of Tomb III yielded a gold bowl (ND 1989.255 – IM 115548)[42] of which the rim is inscribed with a cuneiform text, naming the owner of the object: "Property of Šamši-ilu, the commander-in-chief." On the rim, there are also two incised animals: a scorpion and "an animal like a fox" (Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 119) or "an animal resembling a wolf" (Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 29). The object seems to be offered by Šamši-ilu[43] to the woman later buried in this coffin. A bronze *askos* (duck-shaped weight) (ND 1989.158 – IM 115432) was discovered in the sarcophagus of Tomb II. On the left side of this weight, "one-sixth (of a mina)" (6-*su*) is written in cuneiform signs after the scorpion, while, on the right side, "one-sixth (of a mina) of the land" (*štt ʾrqʾ*) is written in Aramaic letters, and there are eight strokes (divided into six and two) which designate the exact measures of the weight.[44] Moreover, there is an inscribed calcite jar fragment (1855–12–05, 16 – BM 118774) from Sherif Khan (or Nineveh, South-West Palace) (Searight, Reade and Finkel 2008: 24–25 no. 76 and fig. 11: 76) with the same introductory formula (*šá* ^{mí}[...]) beside the scorpion as in the aforementioned examples: Property of (*female name*) [...]. The following objects from the North-West Palace also bear images of scorpions: a gold bracelet (ND 1989.8 – IM 105699)[45] of which one of the carved stones inserted with gold settings has an engraved scorpion from the sarcophagus of Tomb II; and several shells with figures of a scorpion (Room HH),[46] in which eyebrow paint was kept and mixed.

These finds, which are all connected to female activities, were discovered in the palaces of Kalḫu and Assur,[47] most of them in Tomb II of the North-West Palace. Those seal impressions belonging to this sphere which depict a scorpion as a single motif or encircled by a guilloche or garland, are of particular importance. They were discovered in Nineveh (supposedly in the palaces). In 1992, Suzanne Herbordt identified 65 examples of this type, constituting 12 per cent of the seal impressions from Nineveh (Herbordt 1992: 68–69, 136–138, pl. 20: 5–6 and pl. 33: 1–7). This group is the second-largest in the corpus after the royal seal impressions. Based on these sealings, together with the relevant textual evidence and the studied seal impressions, Karen Radner (2008) pointed out that these sealed cuneiform tablets and sealings may be related to the economic activities (mainly the textile production and storage) of the queens inside and even outside the palace (Radner 2008: 494–502 and 509–510).

The sealings, depicting the king and his consort in front of Ištar, also belonged to royal households or domestic quarters, a particular sphere inside the court. The textual evidence makes it clear that this part of the palace constituted an economic entity, a separate system in which the Queen Mother and the queens played primary roles. They controlled its specific estates and administration and had their own officials.[48]

[38] Damerji 1999: pl. 32 (*above*); Kamil 1999: 16–18 no. 5; Hussein – Suleiman 2000: 104 and Pic. (58) (the object appears with the number IM 105595); al-Rawi 2008: 137–138: text no. 21 and fig. 15–z; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.2; Hussein – Altaweel – Gibson 2016: 16, 70 and pl. 40d.

[39] Damerji 1999: 6 no. 9; Kamil 1999: 16–18 no. 7; Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 111 and Pic. (41); al-Rawi 2008: 137–138: text no. 24 and fig. 15–cc; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.3; Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 16, 105 and pl. 43c.

[40] Bissing 1940: 153–155 no. 7 and fig. 7a–b; Frahm 1997: 184: "Vase b"; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.4; Onasch 2010: 60–61 no. 182-1 and figs. 16–17.

[41] KAH I: XI and 49* no. 50; Bissing 1940: 180 fig. 40 and 182; Frahm 1997: 184: "Vase a"; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.5; Onasch 2010: 61 no. 182-2.

[42] Fadhil 1990: 482 and pl. 39; Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 119 (incorrectly attributed to Tomb II) and Pic. 152; Niederreiter 2008: 32 no. II.a.6 (incorrectly attributed to Tomb II); Mattila 2011: 1226: Šamši-ilu 1.g.4'; Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 29, 70 and pl. 104.

[43] He held the title commander-in-chief (*turtānu*) at least between 780 and 752 BCE (Mattila 2011: 1226: Šamši-ilu 1).

[44] Al-Rawi 2008: 126–127 and 129–130: text no. 7 and fig. 15–i; Peyronel 2015: 105 no. 33, Tab. 5 and fig. 9; Reade 2018: 145 and 182 B 26; Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 22–23, 100 and pl. 82d–f.

[45] Hussein and Suleiman 2000: 104 and Pic. (73); Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 21, 72 and pl. 74a.

[46] According to the collected bibliographical references (Niederreiter 2008: 84 no. II.b.16x) about the finds from Room HH, "Many of these shells were engraved with figures of scorpions." (Parker 1955: 112). Among them, M.E.L. Mallowan mentions only ND 1714 (Mallowan 1966: I. 112 fig. 57 and 114), while J. and D. Oates report further items: "Three large shell beads bore engraved scorpions" and "The same symbol appears on a number of shell cosmetics containers from the 'trinket collection' found in the Room HH cupboard." (Oates and Oates 2001: 79 and 220–221 fig. 132b).

[47] The exact provenance of the calcite jar fragment (1855–12–05, 16 – BM 118774) is questionable (see above). Moreover, there is a limestone mortar fragment in which the incised scorpion and "table", as well as the detail of a carved figure of a lion, appear. This object was "Purchased in 1825 from the widow of C.J. Rich: clearly from Nineveh" (Searight, Reade and Finkel 2008: 68 no. 478 and fig. 40: 478).

[48] Melville 2004: 48–50; Teppo [Svärd] 2007a: 387–412; 2007b: 263–

Among the emblems, the activity of the royal court was marked by the lion and the bull,[49] while the scorpion marked this sphere inside the palace. The question then arises, what the exact meaning of the scorpion is.

The scorpion is the symbol of Išḫara, who is a goddess of fertility, wedding and birth.[50] As for why the scorpion should have been chosen by the court as the symbol of the goddess Išḫara and the royal consorts, Dominique Collon noted (1995) that "The scorpion carries its young in clusters on its back and this was probably why it became a symbol of fertility."[51]

The scorpion was used as an apotropaic motif in the Mesopotamian cultural sphere. Among the Neo-Assyrian finds from Room HH belonging to the domestic quarters in the North-West Palace, there is a sealing with three impressions made by the same stamp seal (Figure 12).[52] Encircled by a dotted guilloche border, a kneeling female figure raising her hands in prayer in front of a scorpion is depicted. The magical role and use of the scorpion are corroborated by an archaeological group discovered by Austin Henry Layard in the "debris" at the feet of a bull statue in the Southwest Palace of Nineveh. In this group, there is a lapis lazuli scorpion with stones of different sizes and materials (including a cylinder seal as well as cylindrical stones and beads). They appear to be amulets, and their owner would wear them as a necklace.[53]

Figure 12. Composite drawing based on the three seal impressions on the ND 808 sealing.

Interpretation of the scene (the royal couple, Ištar and symbol of Išḫara) on stamp seal BM 2002–05–15, 1

Does the seal image represent a ritual event in which the king and his consort perform in front of Ištar? This cultic scene has yet more meaning, which can be revealed by the figure of the scorpion. In order to interpret the scene on the chalcedony stamp seal, it is worth collecting the archaeological, iconographic, and textual sources which not only demonstrate the scorpion's use and role but give answers to the questions posed by the collective depiction of the four figures: the king and his consort forming a couple, Ištar's effigy, and Išhara's symbol depicted on the cultic scene are all connected with each other.

> "When [. . . .] . the bed is laid
> Let the wife and her husband lie together.
> When, to institute marriage,
> They heed Ištar in the house of [the father-in-law],
> Let there be rejoicing for nine days,
> Let them call Ištar Išḫara.
> *Atra-ḫasīs* I. 299–304 (Lambert and Millard 1999[2]: 64–65)."[54]

The primary written source on the joint appearance of the couple, the effigy, and the scorpion symbol is *Atra-ḫasis.* In the context of marriage and its consummation, a passage of this literary text mentions the two goddesses. Since Ištar, the goddess of love, is neither a goddess of weddings nor a mother goddess, the two goddesses, therefore, are invoked at the act of marriage, and Ištar is represented with Išḫara, meaning that Išḫara's main attributes characterise Ištar, and that they are thus connected with each other.[55]

As for the image of stamp seal BM 2002–05–15, 1 (Figure 1), the association between the two goddesses

268; Macgregor 2012: esp. 55–67; Svärd 2012: 510–515.

[49] Niederreiter 2008: 51–59. For Neo-Assyrian seals of the king's bureau, also referred to state seals, see Radner 2008: esp. 487–494; Nadali 2009–2010.

[50] As for the other aspects of the goddess, see Lambert 1976–1980: 177; Prechel 1996: esp. 185–189.

[51] Collon 1995: 73. Moreover, based on the textual evidence, Christopher Walker points out (Collon 1995: 73 no. 6) that "*tārītum*, from *tarû*, to raise, was used for a nurse (who raises children) and for a scorpion's tail (raised to strike). That the Sumerian for nurse, um-me-da, was also used for the scorpion's tail indicates that the word play was intentional (*AHw* III, 1330 von Soden, s.v. *tārītu(m)* I)." For the other interpretations, see Pientka 2004: 391–400; Galter 2007: 653–659.

[52] Parker 1955: 111–112 fig. 2 and pl. XXII: 1 (the find is designated ND.807); Postgate 1973: 237 no. 263 and 252; Niederreiter 2008: 59–60 fig. 9 and 83 no. II.b.1.

[53] For these finds and their archaeological context, see Layard 1853*b*: 160–161; Collon 1987: 204–205.

[54] For other translations of the literary text, see Prechel 1996: 59; Stol 2000: 117; Foster 2005[3] [first published in 1993]: 238.

[55] For further sources and comments about the role of Išḫara in weddings, see George 1992: 315; Prechel 1996: 58–60; Stol 2000: 117–118; George 2003: 190; Foster 2005[3] [first published in 1993]: 238 note 5; Galter 2007: 657; Svärd 2015: 74–75; May 2018: 265–266.

Figure 13. Tabloid seal amulet ND 4158 (1957–02–09, 8 – BM WA 132161) (“grey stone”, length: 19.6, width: 13.3, thickness: 8.4 mm) (I) and its modern impressions (II). The photographs are published here by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

gives meaning to the cultic scene. That is, the role of Ištar’s anthropomorphic figure becomes evident due to the symbol of Išḫara, while the king and the queen appear in front of them as a couple. The primary position of the king is evident since, taking the central place in the scene, he is depicted directly in front of Ištar; however, the owner of the stamp seal is his consort, standing behind him. The appearance of the royal figure reflects the king’s prominent role in the scene, whereas the depiction of the king and his consort together is a privilege for the latter (*i.e.*, the bearer of the stamp seal).

In the case of Neo-Assyrian iconography, the association between the two goddesses is attested on a tabloid seal amulet ND 4158 (Figure 13) discovered on the “surface”

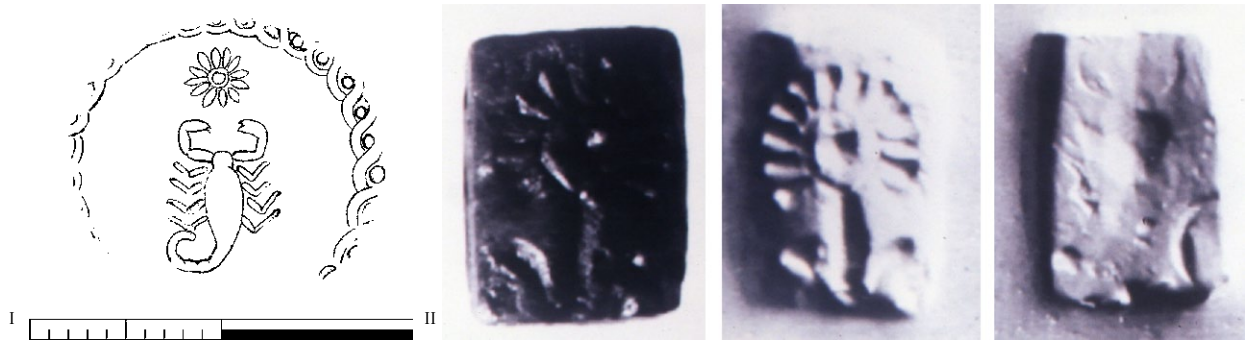

Figure 14. I: Drawing of the seal impression on docket 82–05–22, 40 dated to 658 (Nineveh); II: Tabloid seal amulet ND 1992.451 –IM 127988 ("stone, brown", height: 9 mm, length: 20mm, width: 14 mm). Hussein and Abdul-Razaq 1997/98: 172 no. 27, 178: 27, 183 (photo) and 188 (drawing); Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 53, 184 and pl. 202k. The photographs (Figure 14: II) are published here by permission of late Dr Lamia al-Gailani Werr.

of the North-West Palace during the excavations of M.E.L. Mallowan in 1955.[56] On its two main faces, there are, respectively, a large scorpion and the figure of a goddess sitting on her throne. She wears a rectangular fluted headdress[57] and a long robe whose similar-sized engravings designate the borders and fringes. The goddess raises her right hand and holds a ring in her left. Although she is depicted without her significant attributes (*i.e.*, the star on the top of her headdress, the row of stars on the back of the throne, and the lion), the connection with the scorpion, *i.e.*, the symbol of Išḫara, allows us to ascertain her identification with Ištar.

The association between the two goddesses reveals the meaning of the image, while the arrangement of the depicted figures constitutes the significance of this artefact from the point of view of the user. The object, which was perforated longitudinally, was available for sealing; however, it is essential to emphasise that the intaglio images in question appear on the opposite sides, which also confirms its use as an amulet.[58] Besides the importance of the association between the two goddesses, it is worth examining the structural arrangement and execution of the iconography, since they reflect the methods of the artisans.

As for the choice concerning the divine images and motifs as well as the structural principles guiding their arrangement, there is an inscribed docket (Figure 14: I)[59] from Nineveh dated to 658 BCE (during the reign of Ashurbanipal) whose seal impression reflects an interesting example of the two goddesses' appearance. Unlike the previous images, in which Ištar appears in her anthropomorphic figure while Išḫara is in the form of her symbol, it depicts two divine symbols (the rosette or the Venus[60] and the scorpion) encircled with a dotted guilloche border. From the Fourth Well (Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 50–51) in the southeast corner of Courtyard 80 of the North-West Palace, one find (Figure 14: II) exhibits similar depictions of the goddesses. This is supposedly a similar object to the studied tabloid seal amulet (Figure 13). One of its main depicted fields provides a flower which terminates in a rosette (symbol of Ištar), while there is a large scorpion on the other side of the object.[61]

As for the iconographical study of Ištar and Išḫara, there are two interesting finds; one was discovered in Hasanlu (northwest Iran), while the Philistine town Ekron (Tel Miqne) provides the other item. Although until now they do not belong to the Assyrian palace sphere studied here, it is possible to identify their evident Assyrian background or influence and their meaning based on their images, which reflect principles similar to the previous items, a fact that allows us to better understand the purposes of the artisans in the case of a depiction.

[56] This information originates from the database of the British Museum, viewed 11 October 2015, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1957-0209-8>

[57] Similar-type headdresses are known on cylinder seals, see Collon 2001: 74 nos. 139 and 140, pl. XI. However, on carefully detailed examples these engravings can designate a simplified row of feathers, on the upper part of the headdress.

[58] As for this object type, see Magen 1994: 163–175.

[59] Fales and Postgate 1992: 108 no. 93 and pl. V; Niederreiter 2008: 61–62 fig. 11 and 84 no. II.b.15.

[60] For the twelve-pointed star on the sealing, see the relief discovered in Assur (Ass. 8262 – BM 115694) in which Ištar's similar type of astral symbol (*i.e.*, Venus) appears beside the winged sun-disc and the crescent moon, see Andrae 1938: 50 and pl. 21: c = Andrae 1977[2]: 78 fig. 56).

[61] It is interesting to note that the star and the scorpion appear on a few knobbed conical stamp seals made of faience or frit (for their function see Wicke 2012 and 2016). Among them, one find (ND 1992.184 – IM 127723), originating from Chamber A under Room 74, depicts a scorpion (Hussein and Abdul-Razaq 1997/98: 170 no. 9, 177: 9, 181 [photo] and 187 [drawing]; Hussein, Altaweel and Gibson 2016: 50, 184 ["faience, yellow", height: 22 mm, diameter: 21 mm] and pl. 193a).

Figure 15. I: half-barrel-shaped bead or seal amulet HAS 62–917 (MMA 63.109.20, Rogers Fund 1963) (steatite, height 10.7, length 28.5, width 16.3 mm) and its impression (II). The photographs are published here by courtesy of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

Among the finds discovered in Hasanlu (Burned Building III), there is a "loaf-shaped hemispheroid" steatite object (Figure 15), identified as a bead or stamp seal,[62] which appears in the catalogue among the objects described as "Stylistic Legacy Uncertain." The flat side of the object depicts a large scorpion, while on its slightly bulging back is a star. The star consists of a central circle, and eight triangular rays. The scorpion is framed above and below by a row of triangles, while the star above and below, as well as each side of the object, are decorated with chevron borders. These decorative elements are framed with double incisions.

Although Michelle I. Marcus pointed out that the Assyrian elements, that is, the star and the chevron border, as well as the overall style, date to the ninth century BCE, she also concluded concerning the Assyrian background that "the stamp seal did not seem to return to general use in Assyria until the late eighth century BCE"[63] Based on the decorative elements, chosen symbols, and applied technology, the Assyrian background is evident, and its engraved figure and motifs reflect very close similarities to those depicted on Neo-Assyrian linear-style cylinder seals; we assume that this object originates from a Neo-Assyrian seal-making workshop. Due to the particular form of the

[62] Marcus 1996: 57 no. 93, 131–132: 96 fig. 112 and pl. 27: 93 (presented among the stamp seals by Marcus 1996: 10: 1 and 11 fig. 4.1); Niederreiter 2018: 72 (also mentioning similar objects).

[63] Note the conclusion of Michelle I. Marcus "It remains uncertain, then, whether no. 93 is a foreign import or local product inspired by an early Mesopotamian stamp shape; or perhaps even a re-engraved prehistoric seal." (Marcus 1996: 57 no. 93). For the *loaf-shaped hemispheroid* type, see Marcus 1996: 10: 1 and 11 fig. 4.1.

object, only the flat side bearing the scorpion was available for sealing (Figure 15: II); however, the meaning of its iconography becomes clear based on the combination of the two symbols. Together, they indicate that this steatite object also functioned as an amulet for its bearer (as did the studied tabloid seal amulets, Figures 13 and 14: II).

The other example is a silver pendant ("medallion"), one of the twenty-one silver from a cache discovered in the upper city of Ekron (Stratum IB, destroyed by the Babylonians in 603 BCE) (Figure 16).[64] On the oval-shaped field, Ištar is standing on a striding lion, and a female worshipper appears in front of her. On the upper field are the Sibitti, a winged sun-disc and crescent moon. The goddess wears a feather-topped headdress and a long mantle. Behind her upper body, three circles and different-sized and oriented engravings constitute the stars' rays. She raises her right hand in greeting and holds the leash of the lion in her left. These are the characteristics and attributes of Ištar; however, the execution and the appearance reflect local features (*i.e.*, provincial shaping). The worshipper, who is depicted without hair, similarly to the goddess, raises her hands. Her clothing is decorated with parallel, almost horizontal, engraved lines. As for her position, it is interesting to note that her feet, shaped with single engraved lines, are situated slightly above the baseline. This arrangement can be explained by the particular motif employed, the lower part of which touches the paw of the lion and turns below the worshipper's feet. This small motif is a scorpion.[65] Although it is executed with a combination of simple straight and slightly curving engraved lines, the proportions and details characterising scorpions are recognisable: the pincers, the striated abdomen and legs rendered with the same four engravings, and the long, curving tail. Although only a female worshipper appears in this scene, this iconography reflects an association between Ištar and Išḫara similar to that in the studied examples, as well as similar structural principles. The meaning of the depiction and the function of the object is evident from the point of view of the depicted female supplicant who wore this silver pendant.[66]

Figure 16. Silver pendant from Ekron (Tel Miqne). The photograph is published here by permission of Seymour Gitin (Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem).

Regarding the connection between the presented images, we can talk about the influence of the central workshops, or a process can be reconstructed that took place outside the palace and in which the copies differing in quality from their established models appeared. In the imagery, the common depictions of the two goddesses could spread; however, it is important to emphasise that the meaning of their similar joint appearance was evident for the artisans and users, indicating that there was an identical concept behind them.

As for the iconography of the studied stamp seal (Figure 1) and seal impressions (see footnote 12: *a–g*), we can ascertain that their cultic and magical roles were at least as important as their function in bureaucratic administration; and we can follow the common appearance of Ištar and Išḫara in the beliefs and the temple ground. Their secular connection can

[64] Gitin 1997: 93 and 102 fig. 21; Gitin 1998: 175 and 180 fig. 18; Golani and Sass 1998: 62 fig. 9 and 70–72 fig. 14:2; Ornan 2001: 238 fig. 9.7 and 246–249; Cornelius 2009: 24–25 and 35 fig. 11; Gitin 2010: 344.

[65] The motif in question is identified by Tallay Ornan as "a cultic stand decorated with horizontal lines, probably imitating similar painted vessels discovered in Tel Miqne" (Ornan 2001: 247); however, this small figure attests features similar to scorpions: the slightly turned position of its lower part, its surface patterning, and its size compared to the two figures.

[66] Among the silver pendants discovered at Zincirli, there are two items in which the figure of Ištar standing on a striding lion is depicted in front of a female worshipper without the scorpion, while the Sibitti and the crescent moon appear above them (von Luschan 1943: 98, pl. 46: c and e). Furthermore, a silver pendant from Assur depicts a cultic scene with a couple (a bearded worshipper with his wife) in front of Ištar standing on the back of a striding lion (Sümer 1956: 81–82 figs. 30–31). Sümer identifies the faint engraved detail above these figures as a crescent moon.

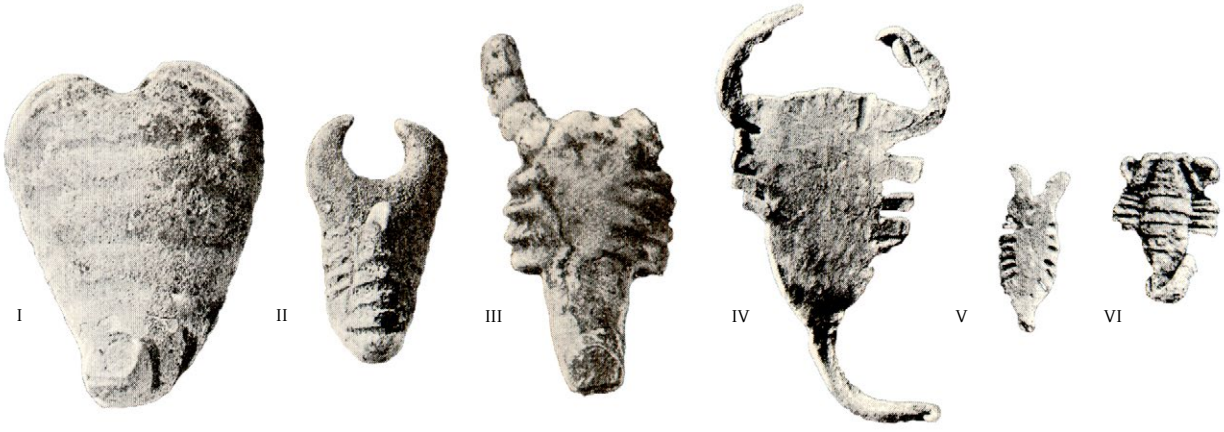

Figure 17. Glazed terracotta (I–III) and lead (IV–V) scorpions from the temple of Assyrian Ištar ("Die jüngeren Ischtar-Tempel") (based on Andrae 1935: pl. 37: h, i, k and pl. 44: a, b, d).

be demonstrated at the temple of Assyrian Ištar (*Ištar Aššurītu)*, where a chapel (or shrine) was dedicated to Išḫara.[67] The building inscription of Adad-nērārī I (*c.*1305–1274 BCE) notes the restoration works in different parts of the temple complex including "the 'house' of Išhara which is (also) in the courtyard had become dilapidated" (... É ^{d}*iš-ḫa-ra / šá tar-ba-ṣi-ma i-tu-ru-ma*).[68] During excavations of the sanctuary, among the votive offerings, small scorpions made of terracotta, glazed terracotta, and lead were found at the base of the cult statue dated to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (*c.*1243–1207 BCE) as well as inside ("Kammer 5" and "Raum 6") and near the temple (Figure 17).[69] Among the collected seal impressions (see footnote 12), the sealings of Nineveh were presumably discovered in the palace (*a–f*), while the only sealing from Assur (*g*) was registered from the "archaischen Ištar-Tempel" (layer G) (Klengel-Brandt 1994: 147); however, the exact location of this find within the temple district of Ištar is unclear.

A common creation of the scribes and artisans in the court

By analysing the chosen chalcedony stamp seal (Figure 1), we see the origin and pattern of a composite scene. It is also possible to identify its functional and symbolic role. The meaning of the scorpion, the complementary motif of the scene, can be interpreted in light of Mesopotamian beliefs and cults. It is the symbol of Išḫara, and it is associated with marriage. This sphere of application is also connected to Ištar, but in such contexts, the goddess appears alongside the symbol of Išḫara. We can outline a system in which centuries-old Mesopotamian traditions and a (somewhat) consistent requirement for the same image can be demonstrated. Originally it was a divine symbol and an apotropaic motif; however, in the palace, it also became an emblem which designates property and the sphere of its application. The figure of the scorpion essentially represents these qualities together on the cultic scene; however, the husband and wife figured in the cited literary passage from *Atra-ḫasīs* can be associated with concrete figures on the scene.

These collected examples (Figure 1 and see footnote 12: *a–g*) are manufactured following a common model during the Sargonid dynasty, in a particular period in Assyrian history. Under the Sargonid kings, in order to establish the new and fundamental role of the empire, the court responded not only with monumental constructions and scholarship allowed by the spread of literacy but also with artistic creations. Evidently, the imagery is not only for decoration but also has an ideological significance. The scholars of the court, an intellectual elite, brought this theme to light; and these symbolic depictions were used in parallel by members of the court and the administrative system. It is worth examining the objects dated to the Sargonid kings with their ideological significance in mind. The images show that they continually created new compositions, and enlarged the existing themes and visual compositions of the stories known from literary works. Although the king is the central figure of this art, he is not the main

[67] As for the Middle-Assyrian sources from Assur about Išḫara as well as her connection with Ištar, see van Buren 1937–39: 6 and 25; Prechel 1996: 70–72: 5.3; Meinhold 2009: 69–71.

[68] Grayson 1987: 149–151: A.0.76.15 l. 19–20. For additional sources about Išḫara's cult place (*ḫuršu, bēt šuḫuri*) in the temple of Assyrian Ištar (*Ištar Aššurītu*), see George 1993: 122–123 no. 756: é.me.^{d}inanna and 165 no. 1336.

[69] Among the scorpions, there are terracotta and glazed terracotta items (Andrae 1935: 94 no. 8 and pl. 37: h–k; Schmitt 2012: 114–115: 9.4.2.1 Skorpione aus Quarzkeramik [Kat. 36–46], pl. 169: 36–41 and pl. 170: 42–46) as well as lead items (Andrae 1935: 25–26, 102–103 and pl. 44: a–f; Schmitt 2012: 115–116: 9.4.2.2 Skorpione aus Blei [Kat. 47–53], pl. 170: 47–50 and pl. 171: 51–53).

figure in the depiction studied here, which is the very reason why this example is important.

In recent research, the "court" and the role of palace art have been interpreted by drawing from sources that deal primarily with the king; however, the studied iconographical sources can shed light on the function of the court. The centre can also be examined from such perspective. In this case, one particular, but not isolated, part of the palace complex is open to interpretation. The research reveals the interior workings of the palace, the structure of the central power and the function of its systems, as well as the roles of its members. From these sources, we can study the high-quality iconography and luxury items, as well as identifying the role of the amulets and the stamp seals in a well-organised administrative system, all of which are equally connected to the domestic quarters of the palace and its members. However, this domain signifies only a small part of a system in which the king is the central figure, constituting a link between the divine world and this world.

Abbreviations used

ADD	Johns, C.H.W. 1898–1923. *Assyrian Deeds and Documents*. I–IV. Cambridge and London: Bell.
AHw	Soden, W. von 1965/1972/1981. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* I–III. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
KAH	Messerschmidt, L. and O. Schroeder 1911/1922. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts* I–II. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
VS	Vorderasiatischen Abteilung (ed.) 1907–1917. *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin* I–XVI. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.

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Chapter 9:
Gods, rulers, and death.
Nonverbal expressions and group identity in Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian monumental art[1]

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Abstract. From a sociological perspective, nonverbal expressions can communicate much, ranging from political to religious sentiments. At the same time, nonverbal expressions can take on even greater significance in different contexts: they may galvanize a sense of group identity because they imply sharing and collaboration among individuals, who evolve the capacity to demarcate group membership through symbolic markers, such as gestures, body movements, proxemic, and the like. Hence, nonverbal expressions can play a role in maintaining social and psychological order and can become a clear marker of collective identity.

Cultural contact between Syro-Anatolian states and the Assyrian empire during the earlier first millennium BCE is known to be notoriously intensive, involving many aspects and affecting material culture, social practices, and social structures to varying degrees. Different kinds of cultural contact may have initiated processes of self-reflection within the collective, or they may have had the potential to induce cultural change. On the material level, this encounter can bring about different effects, ranging from spontaneous rejection to acceptance of specific visual motifs.

This article provides an examination and comparison of visual representations of submission and drinking gestures in Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian monumental art, in order to highlight the ways in which these visual motifs were rejected or were appropriated and re-instrumentalized by both parties. It is concluded that the interaction between Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian art reveals: 1) a dialectic between the acceptance and rejection of specific visual motifs, and 2) a conscious formation and protection of nonverbal expressions as signs of collective identity.

Keywords: Nonverbal expressions, Gestures, Social identity theory, Cultural appropriation, Syro-Anatolian states, Assyrian empire.

Communication experts have observed that less than a third of the meaning transferred during a personal conversation between individuals comes from the words that are spoken (Gyasi *et al.* 2015: 51). Nonverbal communication, which makes up the rest, is defined as 'the transfer and exchange of messages in any and all modalities that do not involve words' (Matsumoto *et al.* 2013: 4). In fact, no discussion of communication is complete without the inclusion of nonverbal behaviors (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, loudness or tone of voice, body language, proxemics or personal space, eye gaze, haptics, appearance), that is often hard to be aware of in daily life. Although ineffable in many ways, nonverbal communication is omnipresent and influential to the point that people can meet strangers and glean, without any apparent effort, a wealth of important and valid information about them, such as their feelings, emotions, thoughts, personality, identity, sociodemographic characteristics, conversational intentions, and much besides (Hall and Knapp 2013: 3). Yet, even though nonverbal expressions can be reliable parameters for understanding different aspects of an individual or a group of individuals, scholars have hardly recognized nonverbal communicative acts as an essential means of contact between different worlds – the divine, the human, and the netherworld.[2] Above all, studies seem to have neglected the fundamental contribution that sociology may offer to this area of research. Nonverbal expressions have recently been evaluated by sociologists as purveyors of identity, in the same way as symbols, rituals, dresses, costumes, behaviors. This aspect

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[2] Seminal in this field is the volume by Mayer I. Gruber (1980), who carried out a resolutely comparative approach to nonverbal language in textual sources, seeking functional and semantic cognates in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hebrew (see also Gruber 1975). Later scholars, also relying on iconographic evidence, have similarly focused on specific contexts in which nonverbal communication took place, such as the approach to the divine (Ornan 2005; Frechette 2012; Strawn 2015; Portuese 2024) and the audience with the king (Gabelmann 1984; Cifarelli 1998; Zgoll 2003; Portuese 2020; see Goldman 1990 for a very general and descriptive analysis of Assyrian gestures). Work on hand gestures in particular, with a focus on the Northwestern Semitic literature and the Hebrew Bible, has also been carried out by Calabro 2013, 2014a, and 2014b.

should not only stimulate researchers to approach evidence which hints at nonverbal expressions, but also invites one to reconsider the possible ways through which nonverbal communication was fundamental in linking, dividing, or distinguishing groups and cultures in the ancient Western Asia. Such an approach raises the following new questions for further research:

- Were nonverbal expressions used to convey group identity?
- Could nonverbal language be transmitted from one culture to another? If so, for what reasons?
- Were dominant nonverbal expressions (e.g. gestures) always produced by the dominant power?

I happily dedicate the present essay to Tallay Ornan – who has contributed so much to our understanding of ancient Western Asia imagery. It is my intention to pursue here the value(s) associated with submission and with drinking gestures depicted in Syro-Anatolian and Assyrian visual representations.[3] I shall argue that the nonverbal expressions which are portrayed on these representations show the identity of the culture which has produced them, and are understandable only when one given culture met or clashed with another. By relying on a sociological theoretical background elaborated within social identity theory, I shall further suggest that nonverbal language may have been conceived as an intangible commodity that could be appropriated for political reasons in the context of power imbalances.

Cultural appropriation and cultural protection

To begin with, I would like to recall two practical examples from different historical and cultural perspectives that may help the reader to see the close and undeniable connection between identity and nonverbal communication. The first comes from the courtesy books that bloomed in the 16th century and that were mostly written for an aristocratic audience.[4] Through instructions on manners, such books established gestures as the most visible sign of difference between the nobility and the common population and created the conditions for separating identities not only between social classes but also between aristocracies, such as the French and the Spanish. Manners thus identified classes and grounded the distinction between a peasant and a nobleman.[5] The second set of examples is contemporary. The fingers held together in a vertical orientation, often referred to as the Italian hand gesture 'cosa vuoi?' (what do you want?) and which is used to express disagreement, frustration, or disbelief, is nowadays synonymous with Italian identity and anyone can make this gesture as a way of pretending to be Italian. Another recent example is the Trump fist pump: not only do Trump supporters share a common identity by their support of Donald Trump, but they have a nonverbal gesture as an outward sign of their group identity (Garcia 2021).

These examples show that a particular set of nonverbal signs can communicate identity or the belonging to a group. Further, the simultaneous communication of a nonverbal group expression can unify and blend its members by putting everyone on the same page, in the same moment, at the same time. The reason why there is a clear interdependency between group identity and nonverbal communication is closely linked to what identity is and how it can be expressed. In this regard, as a scholar of the ancient Western Asia, I find myself pleasantly bewildered by the incredible and fascinating, yet intricate web of works populating sociological studies when it comes to searching for an answer to these questions. The theoretical notions that I consider appropriate for this essay date back to the 1970s, having their roots in Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory. According to Tajfel, social identity is more important than personal identity and, since groups give us a sense of social identity, a sense of belonging to the social world, the theory describes the belonging one has to a group as an important source of pride and self-esteem (Hogg 2016; Trepte and Loy 2017). This perceived difference between social and personal identity, and the superior pull of the latter, was later emphasized by means of the self-categorization theory which asserted that, although the two work together to drive an individual's behavior, an individual within a group becomes depersonalized because he/she is seen through and categorized according to the defining attributes of the in-group, describing and prescribing group-appropriate ways to think, feel, and behave (Turner *et al.* 1987; Hogg 2016: 8–9; Trepte and Loy 2017). These two theories offer an explanation of the

[3] Here I follow Osborne 2012. Other well-known terms are Late-Hittite/Späthethitisch (Orthmann 1971), Neo-Hittite (Bryce 2009), Syro-Hittite (Gilibert 2011; Bonatz 2016), or Levantine–Anatolian (Cornelius 2019).

[4] For a list of courtesy books, see Portuese and Scalisi 2021: 129–130 and, especially, Paternoster 2022: 34–38. Courtesy books were basically part of a general effort to 'civilize' the upper classes, who were the first to be influenced by a new ethic of transforming human behavior, in order to subordinate the lower classes at a later stage. For the reasons of the so-called 'civilizing process', see Elias 1978 and Muir 2005: 125–134.

[5] This notion was eminently described by Mikolaj Rej, a seventeenth century Polish writer of noble origins, who wrote: 'You can tell the attitudes and inclinations of people from their comportment. Because when a rustic or cowardly person wants to say something seriously, what do you see? He squirms, picks his fingers, strokes his beard, pulls faces, makes eyes and splits every word in three. A noble man, on the contrary, has a clear mind and a gentle posture; he has nothing to be ashamed of. Therefore, in appearance, in his words, and in comportment he is like an eagle which without any fear looks straight at the sun, or like a commander-in-chief who by his noble posture and proud bearing inspires his soldiers and subordinates to courageous acts' (quoted in Bogucka 1991: 191).

above-mentioned examples by showing how social structural elements not only impact the individual's behavior but also the ways in which behaviors occur. The consequences one must draw are that social identity and its categorization has the potential to affect the functions of communication (Yilmaz 2020: 213; see also Chen and Bargh 1997; Gyasi *et al.* 2015).

But, to return to the examples of courtesy books and their social impact on distinguishing classes, and the contemporary gestures of being Italian or Trumpist to indicate nationality and political orientation, it appears clear to me that these identities are constructed with reference to the, or an, 'other', an 'outsider.' This aspect has been particularly noted by the sociologist Stuart Hall, who asserted that identities are constantly subject to processes of change and transformation, and, above all, that they are constructed through difference. To quote Hall (2000: 18), '[t]he unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as foundational, is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure, every identity naming as its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, that which it 'lacks'.'

Now, what happens when two different identities meet, or clash, is unpredictable, and the potential social, cultural, political, or economic consequences require specific analyses. It is in this context that I propose to examine two phenomena that may have taken place when the Assyrian empire and the Syro-Anatolian culture met.

The first phenomenon, which has been the subject of increased interest in recent years, is commonly called 'cultural appropriation.' Without delving into the issue of the concept of culture (in this regard, see Arya 2021), in its basic meaning 'cultural appropriation' refers to the taking, or appropriating, tangible or intangible items of a culture or group from the members of another culture. The acts of cultural appropriation are quite diverse and may include artistic styles and representations, stories, poems, lands, artefacts, intellectual property, or religious symbols. What is essential to the definition of cultural appropriation is the existence of an asymmetrical relation of power between the two cultures, such that the dominant culture takes from the subordinate culture, with the consequence that the appropriated artefact or idea is used by the former (Young 2008: 5; Arya 2021). Integral to cultural appropriation is the process of commodification, which denotes the means by which cultural goods or ideas are transformed into commodities or objects of trade.[6] One effect of this phenomenon is the so-called pizza-effect, which is seen when a dominant culture takes from a less powerful culture, repackages the cultural object through commodification, and sells it back to the original culture.[7]

The second phenomenon is what social psychologists refer to as a form of protecting the integrity of a group identity when a social identity is alleged to be under threat. According to this assumption, people are more likely to retreat into their group identity when the group is under threat or in conflict with other groups. In these circumstances, to quote the social psychologist Russell Spears (2021: 380), 'group members are likely to self-stereotype and conform more to the prototypical in-group position, to close ranks and perceive greater in-group as well as out-group homogeneity, and generally to show more group loyalty, avoiding individual mobility to escape the group even when possible and individually advantageous.' My understanding of this notion is that group identity and its attributes may become stronger and more evident if it is threatened in some way. In the struggle of affirming itself, the group attempts to conform more notably to the prototypes, meaning the fuzzy sets of interrelated attributes (attitudes, behaviors, customs, dress and even nonverbal expressions) that capture overall similarities within the group and overall differences from other groups (Hogg 2016: 8).

Having set out these theoretical premises, what I want to underscore in the case-studies that follow is, first, the necessity of a methodological approach to nonverbal communication in visual representations from the ancient Western Asia; and, second, an insistence upon the social phenomena of adopting specific nonverbal expressions by dominant and powerful cultures in the ancient Western Asia.

Raising the fist(s)

The famous façade of the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu shows two lines of tribute-bearers and Assyrian officials. The foreigners have been unanimously interpreted as westerners coming from Patina or the Syrian coast, and the gesture they perform has been the subject of extensive discussion by scholars (Figure 1).[8] Megan Cifarelli (1998: 216) noted that this gesture recalls the one which is often enacted by Assyrian kings before the symbols of gods and is known as *labān appi* – literally 'to touch the nose' – which consists in raising one's hand in front of one's face with the thumb fully extended. Although I have previously expressed support for Cifarelli's idea (Portuese 2020: 118), I must slightly diverge from this reading of the gesture or, at least, correct it in some way. For, in fact,

[6] For an exploration of cultural appropriation and commodification especially in art, see Root 1996.

[7] The term was coined by Bharati (1970) with reference to the re-evaluation of the Indian cultural forms in India (e.g., Sanskrit religious and poetic literature) after being appreciated in the West. See also Arya 2021: 5–6.

[8] See Portuese 2020: 69–70 and related past bibliography.

Figure 1. Tribute-bearers (slab 7), from the throne room's façade of the Northwest Palace at Kalhu (© British Museum 124562).

the *labān appi* gesture was introduced in Assyria later, during the reign of Sennacherib, and was probably a Babylonian gesture in origin, as Tallay Ornan (2005: 83, 86, 118–119) has observed. Thus, I find myself persuaded to look to the West as the source used by Ashurnasirpal II's sculptors to depict these foreigners. In particular, it seems that raising the right fist is a reverence gesture performed in the Syro-Anatolian region already in the 11th century BCE and is found as performed by Taita, king of Palistin, in front of the storm god on a relief from Aleppo (Figure 2; Hawkins 2011: 40–45). The same gesture is also later performed by Warpalawa, king of Tuwana, to worship the god Tarhunza (Hawkins 2000: 516–518, pls. 292–295). In much a similar way, I believe that the two fists raised by the deities in procession and by the humans in an audience scene from Karatepe (Figure 3) represent the same gesture (Çambel and Özyar 2003: pls. 84–91, 94, 146–147). Finally, the scribe standing in front of the king Barrakib on his orthostat relief performs Taita's gesture (Orthmann 1971: pl. 63, Zincirli F/1a). Therefore, what we see is a peculiarity of Syro-Anatolian art which features in monuments from the 11th to the 8th century BCE. The gesture might have already been introduced in Assyria in the 11th century as it seems to appear on the White Obelisk, and was later adopted by Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III (Börker-Klähn 1982: pl. 132b, fifth register form the top). In fact, both kings ventured to the West, and Shalmaneser even reports that he visited Aleppo to make sacrifices in front of the god Adad in 853 BCE (RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii86b–87).[9] There, Shalmaneser III probably even had the chance to come across Taita's monument, and possibly to repeat and emulate the gesture to honor the deity. However, while Shalmaneser III indiscriminately used this gesture to represent any subject on his monuments,[10] Ashurnasirpal II seems to have adopted it to represent only foreigners from the

[9] For the targets of the western campaign of Ashurnasirpal II, see Liverani 1992: 73–80, 95–96.

[10] Marcus 1987: pl. 20; Bär 1996: 219–220; Schachner 2007: 152. However, Israelites and Patineans on the Black Obelisk perform the same gesture (Börker-Klähn 1982: 152 D2-152 D5).

Figure 2. Taita, king of Palistin, in front of the Storm-God of Aleppo (reliefs ALEPPO 5 and ALEPPO 6), from the Temple of the Storm-God of Aleppo, Aleppo citadel (https://www.wmf.org/project/temple-storm-god-citadel-aleppo).

West, since individuals who raise their fists before the face have the same attire and bring similar goods.[11] Thus, my feeling is that sculptors recognized this as a nonverbal gesture that was typically performed by westerners: Assyrians saw the groups of people populating what we today commonly refer to as the Syro-Anatolian states as a distinct and clearly defined entity through fuzzy sets of interrelated attributes, such as attitudes, behaviors, customs, dress, and especially gestures.[12]

Now, without attempting to define the identity of these states, which is a complex matter and to which other studies have already contributed,[13] I suggest that the raising-fist(s) gesture was the most easily perceivable form of nonverbal language which identified a group of people living in the West. Following Izak Cornelius (2019) in his essay on material imagery of Sam'al monuments and the issue of Aramaean identity, I would add that, when it comes to the question of what constitutes the identity of a group, nonverbal expressions must be taken into account as a means used by others (Assyrians) to see and define another group (westerners or Syro-Anatolian states). Nevertheless, it would be misleading to believe that a similar gesture was appropriated by Assyrians and displayed through their monumental art out of a naïve interest towards the other and otherness. Rather, I believe that Assyrians fully grasped the significance of the Syro-Anatolian gesture, which was accordingly not deprived of its symbolic meanings.

The gesture of raising the fist(s) before the face in Syro-Anatolian monumental art has been described

[11] The gesture was performed by similarly clad foreigners depicted on reliefs, which once might have decorated the West Wing of the Northwest Palace (WFL–21 lower register, and perhaps WFL–27; Barnett and Falkner 1962: 25, pls. 119, 124; Paley and Sobolewski 1987: 78–79, pl. 5) and whose context suggests that the events depicted were related to the Mediterranean campaign (Portuese 2020: 169). In much a similar way, some of the foreigners depicted on the Rassam Obelisk probably come from the West according to the nature of the goods they are bringing (Reade 1980). Another group of foreigners performing the same gesture was depicted on the Balawat gates and probably come from the West too (Curtis and Tallis 2008: 43, figs. 33–34).

[12] This assumption was already touched upon by Wäfler (1975: 85), with reference to the 8th-century monument at Ivriz, but later rejected by Bär (1996: 219–220). However, both authors had no knowledge of the monument of Taita, discovered in 2003, which suggests that a similar gesture was already known in the Syro-Anatolian region back in the 11th century. Further support for this thesis comes from the stele of the governor of Mari and Suhu Shamsh-resh-uṣur (second quarter of the 8th century). Here, notwithstanding the several Assyrian features, scholars have highlighted a number of formal and religious aspects which may lead one to define the stele as 'aramäische Kunst' (Magen 1986: 50–51; Mayer-Opificius 1995; for the inscription on the stele, see RIMB 2 S.0.1001). This makes it clear how the image of the governor replicates exactly the image of Taita on his relief from Aleppo, which shows the governor standing in front of deities, raising his right fist before mouth and nose.

[13] E.g. Bunnens 2016; the Foreword and numerous papers in Berlejung *et al.* 2017.

by various interpreters as a gesture of adoration or reverence.[14] However, cracking the original meaning of past nonverbal expressions is not an easy task. A gesture cannot easily convey its exact meaning outside of the context in which it is performed and without an awareness of the identity of the individuals involved. In this sense, I align myself with Mayer I. Gruber (1980: 289 footnote 1) who, in reference to gestures and postures denoting obeisance, states that '[c]onnotations such as reverence or astonishment are supplied by the context rather than by the gesture itself.' On the importance of context, David M. Calabro (2013) has more recently offered a theoretical approach which evaluates particularly the hand gesture semiotically, meaning its referential (symbolic or iconic) and indexical properties. Referential properties may include the shape, motion, and pose of the hand, the body including the gesturing hand, and the physical setting in which the gesture takes place. Indexical properties may include the aspect of the context that is indexed, such as the physical states of participants and of objects, the social roles of participants, the ritual progression or the setting. In light of this, the Syro-Anatolian gesture can be said to be characterized by specific dynamics and features which can be analyzed and categorized as follows:

- *Social status of participants*. The gesture is usually performed by a subordinate (performer) towards an authority (beneficiary), either a king or a deity (Figure 2). However, at Karatepe both humans in an audience scene and the deities in a procession towards a divine triad perform the same gesture (Çambel and Özyar 2003: 83, pls. 84–87 and 91), and in the audience scene a man reciprocates the gesture performed by the group of men he faces (Figure 3).[15] Therefore, the performers of the gesture are always high-ranking individuals, such as leaders, kings, and minor deities.
- *Distance, position, and position of the fists*. There seems to be no great physical distance between the subordinate and the authority and no physical form of separation between the two. Subordinates usually face the authority. However, on a relief from Karatepe which portrays a divine figure standing on a bull, the subordinate, who is smaller in stature, turns his back to the deity (Çambel and Özyar 2003: 104–105, pls. 146–147). As to the height at which the fist(s) is held, this can vary according to representation: on the Aleppo and Ivriz reliefs, as well as on the Barrakib relief, the performer raises his fist(s) to the height of the nose and mouth, whereas on the Karatepe reliefs the performers extend forward their fist and raise their right hand at the chest level.
- *Sequence of acts*. We are not informed about the acts that preceded or followed the gesture. One can only speculate that the raising of the fist(s) was the first, or at least the most prominent and symbolic gesture performed by a subordinate towards the authority, and could be the last one before proffering words, either in the form of a report or a prayer.
- *Context*. As to the iconographic context, the gesture was performed during what we may call an audience scene or a meeting. More complex meetings can be seen at Karatepe, where, in one instance, perhaps an authority together with a group of men move towards the divine triad (Çambel and Özyar 2003: 83, pls. 90–91), and in another example the meeting may involve more than one authority, perhaps a group of leaders (Figure 3). As to the archaeological context, it seems that audience scenes were not placed in hidden or inaccessible locations; gateways (Karatepe) and sacred places (Aleppo temple and Ivriz relief) are the most common.[16]
- *Individual or group gesture*. It seems that the gesture is usually performed by an important figure, such as a king. However, when a group of individuals is involved, the multiple members are shown performing the gesture simultaneously, as in the audience scene of Karatepe (Figure 3).

To sum up so far, some preliminary observations can be drawn. First, the gesture probably identified the social status of the participants, since it was performed by rulers, leaders, and perhaps minor deities. On the available visual evidence, when an individual performing the gesture faces an authority, there is no object or boundary, but an empty space, which suggests that no object was associated with one participant, either symbolically or through physical contact, nor did the gesture serve to focus attention on the object. In addition, the distance between the individuals facing each other does not vary according to the relative social status of the participants and both subordinates and authorities face each other. However, in only one example from Karatepe does the subordinate perform the gesture without facing the deity but with his back turned to it (Çambel and Özyar 2003: pls. 146–147). As

[14] 'Adorationsszenen' or 'Adorationsgestus' (Orthmann 1971; similarly Çambel and Özyar 2003: 83, who define the gesture also as a greeting gesture); 'Ehrfurchtgestus' or 'gesture of reverence' (Magen 1986: 51; see also Mayer-Opificius 1995: 335; Hawkins 2000: 312, 516, and similarly Bär 1996: 219–220 and Schachner 2007: 152).

[15] Çambel and Özyar (2003: 81) cautiously hypothesized that the scene might be connected with a historical event, in particular the alliance between the Cilician Sanduarri and Abdi-Milkutti, king of Sidon (see also Winter 1979). Viewed in this light, the scene might represent a peaceful meeting like the one depicted on Shalmanerser III's throne base.

[16] For the archaeological context, see Çambel and Özyar 2003 (Karatepe), Kohlmeyer 2009; Hawkins 2011: fig. 1 (Aleppo); Harmanşah 2014 (Ivriz).

Figure 3. Audience scene (reliefs 3s–5s), from the North Gate, Right Room, of Karatepe-Aslantaş (courtesy of Tayfun Bilgin).

to the position of the fists, I am inclined to believe that the position did not affect the meaning or value of the gesture. Finally, although the gesture is apparently not included in a sequence of acts, one can only speculate whether it was enacted once one was near the authority and just before words were proffered; perhaps, after performing the gesture, a report, a request, or a prayer was proffered.

Considering these elements resulting from a semiotic analysis of the visual evidence, I would like to infer some conclusions on the meaning of the Syro-Anatolian gesture. The raising-fist(s) gesture was an essential nonverbal expression used to identify the social status of the performer(s) as powerful individuals, and to publicly recognize the identity and power of the beneficiary as an authority. In its basic meaning, it was a nonverbal way to establish the role and relationships between the two. If the gesture was performed by a single individual towards a beneficiary, the gesture highlighted a power imbalance. In contrast, if the gesture was reciprocated, the two were equal, and the same authority was mutually recognized. This suggests that the gesture was basically a gesture of respect, and perhaps also conceived as a reverential greeting gesture. In addition, I would point out that the Karatepe relief, where the gesture is addressed in the opposite direction to the deity, suggests that directionality was perhaps not fundamental to the meaning of the gesture and that the performance of the raising-fist(s) gesture itself in proximity to the authority indicated not only the implicit subordination of the performer, but also the protection which the performer received from the beneficiary. In sum, the Syro-Anatolian raising-fist(s) gesture indicated 1) respect, perhaps in the form of a reverential greeting gesture, and 2) subordination and protection to the beneficiary of the gesture. All these meanings, I believe, were grasped by the Assyrian king, his scribes, and sculptors, which were then manifested and conveyed through the palace façade. In this way western leaders respected and reverentially greeted Ashurnasirpal II, recognized his authority, and came under his power and protection.

But there is more. Ashurnasirpal II did not limit himself to adopting the Syro-Anatolian gesture but also to appropriating another motif which was not at home in the Assyrian iconographic repertoire: the long staff. No Assyrian king before Ashurnasirpal II is portrayed holding a long staff, and Ashurnasirpal II's successors up to Sargon II are all depicted with this royal emblem, with the consequence that the long staff became a symbol of Assyrian kingship (Portuese 2014; 2017). However, its origin is, in my view, western. Beginning with the 10th century stele of the ruler Laramas (Figure 4) from Maraş up to the late 8th century reliefs of Zincirli, all the rulers hold a long staff.[17] In this regard, Luwian inscriptions show that the logogram LIGNUM, meaning 'wood; ruler's staff', is used to determine objects made of wood and words denoting 'authority' (Hawkins 2000: 99). This shows that the long staff was originally held by authorities ruling Syro-Anatolian states and was an identity symbol not only of power but also of a group. Being appropriated by the Assyrian empire and represented as being held by the Assyrian king, especially on the so-called Banquet Stele (Portuese 2014: figs. 1–2) located next to the exit of the throne room from which visitors left the room, the long staff turned the Assyrian king into a western ruler towards whom the same western foreigners now move as though he was their new ruler.[18] What the Assyrian sculptors did can be described as a pizza-effect, because a dominant culture – the Assyrian empire – took this

[17] For the date of Laramas' stele, see Hawkins 2000: 251–255. Rulers holding the long staff are also attested on reliefs dating to the 10th, 9th, and 8th centuries BCE from Arslantepe (e.g. Bonatz 2000: pl. 1, A 4), Karkemish (e.g. Hawkins 2000: 123–124), Çapalı (Bonatz 2000: pls. 16, C 43) and Tuleil (Hawkins 2000: 382).

[18] On the use of Luwian artistic practices in the Banquet Stele of Ashurnasirpal II, see Bunnens 2005.

Figure 4. Stele of king Laramas, from Maraş (courtesy of Tayfun Bilgin).

Figure 5. Funerary stele from Maraş (courtesy of Tayfun Bilgin).

iconographic motif from a subject culture, repackaged the identity object through commodification, and sold it back to the original culture by representing it. This pizza-effect involved a process of re-enculturation because the cultural and identity product needed to be re-established in the culture from which it originated, as it has been dislocated.

Drinking gestures

The second case study takes as its focus the drinking scene depicted on Syro-Anatolian monuments, which we can reasonably acknowledge to be one of the most peculiar representations of Syro-Anatolian art (e.g. Figures 5–6). In this scene, statues, orthostat reliefs, and funerary steles show an individual, a man or a woman, holding a cup or bowl in his or her hand. The element common to the whole iconographic repertoire is not only the presence of a drinking container but the way in which the object is held: it usually rests on the palm of the hand and is held firm by all fingers in a kind of V-shaped grip. The way in which the container is held may slightly vary, as in the Barrakib and Katumuwa steles (Figure 7), but the main feature remains, that is to say that the object is firmly held by the hand.[19] Of the 48 drinking scenes I have collected, for some reason only seven represent an exception to the rule, where individuals hold the cup or bowl with their fingertips.[20]

Now, if we compare these scenes with the famous drinking gestures depicted on Assyrian reliefs, from Ashurnasirpal II through Sargon II and up to Assurbanipal (Figures 8–9), we will note that both the king and the banqueters balance a bowl or beaker in one hand, making use of all the fingertips. As far as I

[19] Struble and Herrmann (2009: 23) suspect that the gesture of the extended index finger may have been an indirect artistic echo of the pious gesture performed by Assyrian kings as a consequence of the increasing Neo-Assyrian influence in the region.

[20] Orthmann 1971: pl. 42, Malatya B/3; pl. 56, Zincirli A/6; pl. 57, Zincirli B/3; pl. 67, Zincirli K/11; Bonatz 2000: pl. 3, A9–A10; pl. 4, A 13; pl. 5, B1–B2, B4–B5; pl. 6, B6, B10; pl. 7, B12; pl. 10, C13–C15; pl. 11, C16–C17, C19; pl. 12, C22, C25; pl. 13, C26–C28, C30; pl. 14, C31–C33; pl. 15, C35; pl. 16, C40–C42, C43; pl. 17, C44, C46; pl. 18, C48; pl. 21, C62; Çambel and Özyar 2003: pls. 110–111, 134–135, 204–207. The exceptions come from Darende (early 11th–10th century BCE; Orthmann 1971: pl. 6, Darende 1; Hawkins 2000: 304–305) and Elbistan (late 9th–late 8th century BCE; Orthmann 1971: pl. 7, Elbistan 1), Karatepe (end of 8th–beginning of 7th century BCE; Çambel and Özyar 2003: 141–144; pls. 142–143, 166–167), Karkemish (late 10th–early 9th century BCE; Orthmann 1971: pl. 21, Karkemis Ab/4), Maraş (875–800 BCE and 825–700 BCE; Bonatz 2000; pl. 19, C 53, pl. 21, C 61). It seems to me that there is no rule underlying these exceptions, since the change in the drinking manner occurs in the same sites (e.g. Karatepe, Karkemish, Maraş) where the customary drinking manner is the one typical of the Syro-Anatolian art. In this context, I would point out that the shape of the container does not affect the drinking manner. Whether large or small, the hand tends to firmly grip the container.

Figure 6. Banquet scene from Arslantepe (courtesy of Tayfun Bilgin).

Figure 7. Katumuwa stele from Zincirli-Sam'al. (https://warehouse-13-artifact-database.fandom.com/wiki/Kuttamuwa's_Stele).

know, the only description of such a mode of drink-consumption comes from Xenophon's *Cyropaedia,* in the context of an imaginary discussion between the young Cyrus the Great and his grandfather Astyages, King of the Medes. This passage reads as follows: 'And Astyages replied with a jest: 'Do you not see,' said he, 'how nicely and gracefully he pours the wine?' Now the cupbearers of those kings perform their office with fine airs; they pour in the wine with neatness and then present the goblet, conveying it with three fingers, and offer it in such a way as to place it most conveniently in the grasp of the one who is to drink' (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.8). The description refers to a particularly elegant practice in the Achaemenid court but, as Margaret Miller (2011) notes, the practice of holding a drinking bowl on fingers was an Achaemenid Persian refinement of an older Assyrian manner of drinking, which was transferred from the Persian court across an impressive geographic range from Georgia to Egypt and even Italy.

Grasping a container or balancing it on one's fingertips can be seen simply as the result of an artistic rendering of two different formal ways of drinking in the Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian cultures. However, I believe that such a difference was less formal than it may first appear and that two different reasons can be proposed: the representation of the 'Assyrian drinking etiquette' was strictly linked to the social value of drinking, the

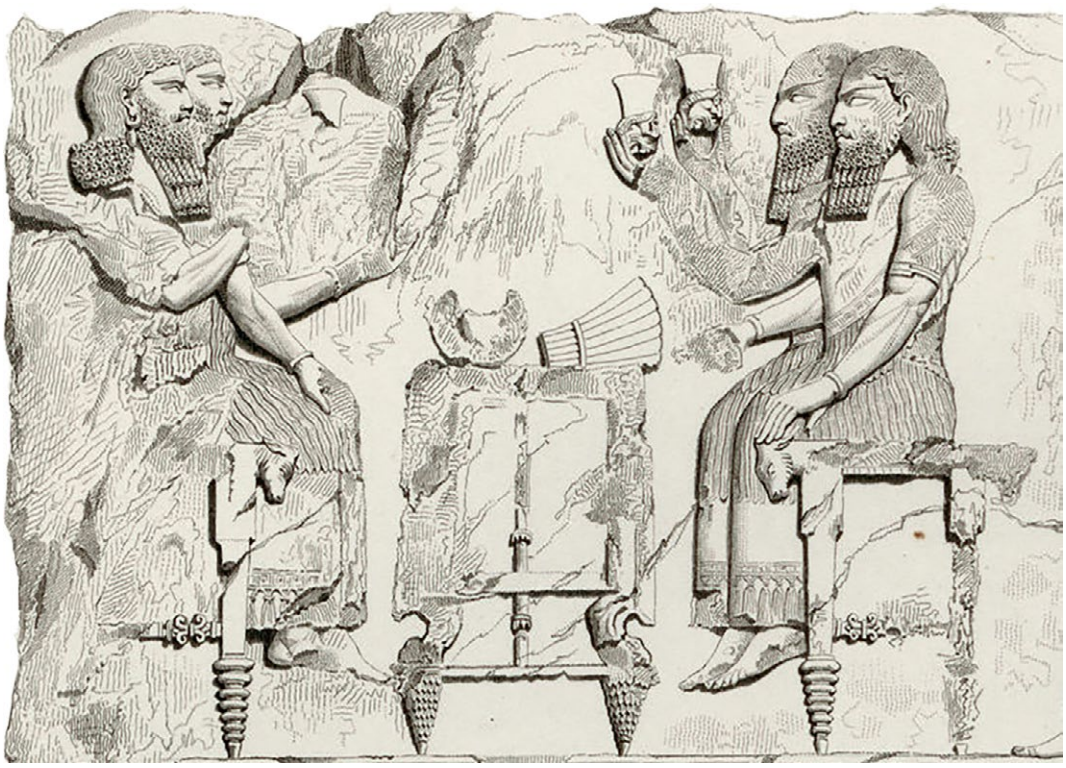

Figure 8. Banquet scene from room 2 (slab 17) of Sargon II's royal palace at Dur-Sharrukin (Botta and Flandin 1849: pl. 64).

meaning of the drink, and the material the container was made of, whereas the representation of the 'Syro-Anatolian drinking etiquette' had its roots in the funerary practices and the provision of food and drink to the deceased year by year.

If we look at the visual evidence, we may notice some important differences between the idea of depicting drinking in the Assyrian society and in the Syro-Anatolian region. Within the Assyrian imagery, drinking always appears as a shared moment, in which several individuals partake, either as servants or banqueters. The king, although missing in some instances, is usually present and actively participates in the event as commensal and donor at the same time (Portuese 2020: 81–86). The king is seated at a distance and his role is often emphasized by the chair on which he sits (Figure 9). Nevertheless, both king and banqueters are all equated by the same gesture, that is to say the rising of the beaker or cup. The drink consumed is probably wine, which was greatly appreciated as an emblem of power and prosperity at the Assyrian court (Stronach 1996) and this may have been one of the reasons why sharing the drink was a particular social act. As is well known, wine was also connected to the divine world (SAA 3 7: 15), included among the substances used in rituals performed in temples as a drink to be poured into censers or libated (SAA 20 1: 24; SAA 20 3: r 10; SAA 20 21: 13–14),[21] used in the purification and anointment of the body and prescribed to heal the king (SAA 10 2; SAA 10 196). Finally, the importance of wine was highlighted by the containers in which it was poured and consumed: these were mostly luxury items made of gold, silver, bronze, or were animal-headed beakers made of silver (Figure 8; Stronach 1996: 194–196; Gaspa 2014: 25–33; 56–58; Hunt 2015: 186–191). Considering all these aspects together, the Assyrian visual evidence primarily presents the drinking as a social act which is governed by cultural rules and expectations, such as the organization of banqueters, the type of drink used, the time and setting where the drinking event takes place, the partakers and their social roles. The representation of drinking also appears to be intimately associated with the institution of hospitality, placing the host (king) in a position of superiority and the guest in a position of subordination. The proffering of drink can highlight the king's capacity for agricultural production and determines his ability to host great social events and to gain the prestige necessary to become an influential member of the community. This suggests that if, on the one hand, drinking functions to facilitate social interaction, on the other it can promote social differentiation and inequality, tensions

[21] Wine is also poured over the killed lions on Assurbanipal's relief, where the king holds the bowl on his fingertips (RINAP 5/1 58; Collins 2008: 134–135).

Figure 9. Detail of an Assyrian ivory plaque showing a royal banquet scene (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 59.107.22).

of social conflict and contradiction. In this sense, the representation of drinking can be used to remind and mark the status of a group and differentiate individuals or groups on the basis of role and prestige (Dietler 1990: 360–372).

In sum, in the Assyrian society wine was promptly and duly flaunted through its depiction as a drink shared and consumed through luxury items (Stronach 1996: 198). In this regard, I believe that the best and most natural way to flaunt this will was to physically exhibit the container by holding it on one's fingertips. This elegant mannerism was the corresponding physical way to display the access to wine and its social consequences.

None of these aspects can be applied to the Syro-Anatolian imagery since, with very few exceptions, drinking is presented as an individualistic event: a person grabs a container, sometimes being served by another person depicted in the relief. The consequence is that drinking scenes focus on the individual who grasps a cup or bowl rather than on a group of individuals. Drinking is here apparently deprived of its social value, cancelling or obscuring any reference to the social roles of the donor and the guest, and the implications linked to the notion of hospitality accordingly. However, the drinking is simply reframed in a new context, since it is mostly shown on funerary monuments which, in the first millennium BCE, emerge as a particular class of artwork in the region from south-eastern Anatolia to the northern and western parts of modern Syria. Here, the guest corresponds to the deceased, receiving an offering of food and wine from the heir, who in turn becomes the donor (Bonatz 2016). Drinking is turned into a social act with the dead rather than with the living. Wine is offered, according to the texts carved on the Katumuwa stele, and is considered as an important product in the economy of south-eastern Anatolia and thus a prestigious regional symbol (Pardee 2009: 53–54; 2014: 47; Bonatz 2014: 40; 2016: 181). However, here wine and its possession/reception does not need to be flaunted but is simply received by the deceased, whose soul lives in the stele (Pardee 2009: 59, 69).[22] The independent soul could only outlive the physical body when offered food and drink. This suggests how the container held by the deceased on the stele was essential for the survival of the soul's afterlife and the integrity and continuity of the immediate family. This is emphasized not only in the iconography of the funerary monuments, but also through the depiction of the heir serving the mother or father with offerings, and/or through the demonstration of the relationship of the person who had the monument erected to the deceased (Bonatz 2016: 182). These notions indicate that the 'drinking etiquette' which we see in Syro-Anatolian funerary monuments, and which was then extended to other monuments, was not part of a set of formalities, belonging to the external trappings of life, or the result of an artistic representation, but a substantial gesture born from an afterlife belief which aimed at highlighting the strict connection between the holding of the cup and the receiving of offerings. In these depictions a connection between body and object was made, which was visually translated into a specific

[22] As noted by Bonatz (2014: 40), '[t]he manner in which they hold the vessel in front of their faces underlines the active role the deceased play in the ritual.'

gesture to preserve the integrity of the ancestors of a group through offerings after death. In other words, holding the cup meant holding on to eternity.[23]

Considering these substantial differences between Assyrian and Syro-Anatolian imageries of drinking, I feel justified to refer to the practice of grasping a drinking bowl or cup on Syro-Anatolian monuments as examples of drinking etiquette which, despite the Assyrianizing elements that feature in some western monuments, did not change at all throughout four centuries.[24] Rather, it seems to me that Syro-Anatolian states in some respects retreated into their group identity and thus trusted in-group features when they were under threat and in conflict with the Assyrian empire. In other words, this was a gesture that galvanized the group, protected its identity and that in no way could be appropriated by the Assyrian empire.

Conclusions

In circling back to the first questions which I have asked at the beginning of this essay, I will attempt to offer some adequate answers for understanding to what extent nonverbal communication contributes to building and expressing a group identity.

Hall's theory has shown that group identities constantly change and transform, and, especially, that they are constructed through difference, through one's relating to the 'other.' This shows how in some cases a group of individuals may build, strengthen, or overtly display its own identity when it comes into contact with another group. The two distinct identities are paradoxically built on this contact, which triggers cultural, social, political, and economic consequences. These can be reflected in various aspects of life, including communication. The Assyrian culture and the mix of local cultures commonly identified under the name of Syro-Anatolian culture at some point met during the first millennium and their encounter led to spontaneous and forced choices at all levels of life. The art which survives from this period shows that some elements were the direct aftermath of this meeting. In particular, the changes that occurred at the level of gestures show how nonverbal expressions could be used to convey group identity and, as nonverbal signifiers, to send out certain messages which represented the kind of values the group intended to transmit. Moreover, it is the encounter between the Assyrian and the Syro-Anatolian cultures that allows us to see which nonverbal expressions can be considered properly Assyrian and which Syro-Anatolian. Yet, the possibility of distinguishing different nonverbal expressions is not the only consequence of the cultural contact we can detect. If there is a power imbalance between the two group identities, this can have many kinds of repercussions and involve deprivations of various kinds. In this context, what I have tried to show is that the inherent power asymmetry between the Assyrian and the Syro-Anatolian cultures may have caused 1) the majority/dominant culture (the Assyrian empire) to appropriate elements from the relatively less powerful culture (the Syro-Anatolian states), and 2) the less powerful culture to strengthen and protect its most significant identifiers. Therefore, there is always, I would argue, a transmission and assimilation of nonverbal language from one culture to another, but this can become cultural appropriation in the negative sense, when there is an evident power imbalance or an overt and perhaps unconscious protection of one's own identity.

The reason for these phenomena lies in the fact that some elements were fully understood by the dominant culture and thus appropriated for the purposes of manipulation, whereas other nonverbal identifiers were probably less understood or there was no interest in appropriating them by the dominant culture. These notions exclude the possibility that a specific dominant set of nonverbal expressions, such as gestures, was always produced by the dominant power. It is rather more likely that the dominant power adopted and appropriated a foreign identifier (such as with the raising-fist gesture and the long staff), repackaged it through commodification and re-established it in the culture form which it originated. This new 'sold' object ended up being believed to have belonged originally to the dominant culture. Such a mechanism reinforced the power dynamic between the two cultures, where the Assyrian empire exerted its cultural imperialism by shaping the values of the cultural commodity which then became internalized or at least shared by the culture of the lesser power. However, on the other side, some nonverbal expressions such as the drinking manner were protected and in no way appropriated by the Assyrian empire. This aspect, I believe, falls within what Virginia R. Herrmann (2018: 519–520) has called the cultural 'response' in the Levant against the process of Assyrianization, which was adopted to protect and define the integrity of a distinctive 'national' culture. In other words, if the Assyrian empire attempted to control the West by means of punishments and rewards, so did the Syro-Anatolian local cultures try to protect, perhaps unconsciously, their shared identity elements through the elevation and segregation of their high identifiers, especially those which were aimed at

[23] Such an eternal physical connection between the receptacle and the individual is also evident from some burial examples from the lower town of Tell Chuera, in North Central Syria, where the skeleton of a girl has been found holding a bowl in front of her mouth while drinking (Orthmann *et al.* 1986: 48–61, fig. 27), or from the Iron Age cemetery at Kamid el-Loz, where drinking vessels were mainly placed near the dead person's head, sometimes also in his right hand (Poppa 1978: pl. 33 grave 51). For other similar examples, see Bonatz 2000: 91.

[24] On 'Assyrianized' western monuments, see Gerlach 2000; Brown 2008; Aro 2009 and 2014; Herrmann 2018; Lovejoy 2022.

preserving the past. In a sense, I agree with Herrmann's suggestion, with reference to the Katumuwa stele, that the persistence of alternative local traditions should be understood as subversive and as a form of resistance to the monopolization of power by the king. Thus, the details that we see in art, especially the ones that highlight the contacts between the Assyrian empire and the Syro-Anatolian culture, can be understood as the result of the cultural interplay between the two identity groups. This cultural interplay gave rise to a careful blend of imperial and local choices which were consciously adopted for the sake of compliance and autonomy.

Abbreviations used

RIMA 3	Grayson 1996.
RIMB 2	Frame 1995.
RINAP 5/1	Novotny and Jeffers 2018.
SAA 3	Livingstone 1989.
SAA 10	Parpola 1993.
SAA 20	Parpola 2017.

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Chapter 10:
Inscribed bullae from the Samaria excavations forgotten for ninety years

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Tali and I (B. Sass) have known each other all our adult lives. To me this has been, and continues to be, a period of happy cooperation, enrichment, and deep friendship. I dedicate this study to Tali in affection, admiration and gratitude.

Abstract. *Samaria* 3 lists two bullae with alphabetic inscriptions, apparently dating to the days of the Northern Kingdom, uncovered in the 1933 campaign. They are not illustrated in the volume, however, and this is probably why they have essentially been overlooked in the literature so far. One of the bullae bears an Egyptian name written in the Hebrew alphabet-variant, while the attribution of the signs on the other remains questionable.

Keywords: Bullae, Egyptian names, Hebrew alphabet-variant, Israel – Northern Kingdom, Samaria.

Two bullae unearthed, then left practically unpublished

Samaria 3: 88 lists two bullae with alphabetic inscriptions, apparently dating to the days of the Northern Kingdom, uncovered in the 1933 campaign.[1] They are not illustrated on pl. XV, where images of the glyptic finds are reproduced. This is probably why they have been essentially overlooked in the literature so far.

J.W. Crowfoot and R. Tappy

The mention in *Samaria* 3 runs as follows:

> 39. Qk 2346. Black. PM.
> Traces of Hebrew letters.
> 40. Qk 2337. Fragment. PM.
> Traces apparently of three letters.

Qk refers to the "strip", located on the summit of Samaria hill (Tappy 2001: 449–451), followed by the field number. PM stands for Palestine Museum, the Rockefeller building in Jerusalem that under the British Mandate housed not only the Palestine Archaeological Museum but also the Department of Antiquities (subsequently the Israel Antiquities Authority or IAA) – headquarters and collections. No word on the two inscribed bullae is to be found in the preliminary report of the campaign, Crowfoot 1933.

J.W. Crowfoot observed that the bullae in question were uncovered among numerous glyptic finds, as well as most ivories, in a disturbed context:

> "The ground had been terribly disturbed, it was impossible to recover the plan of the palace and these objects are of various dates ... New light on the character of the kingdom is thrown by the find of a large number of clay impressions from sealings on the string tied round rolls of papyrus. Thirteen were found in Qk together with a great many small fragments from broken sealings with nothing but thumb or finger marks left on them. ... In Palestine the find of so large a collection of sealings in one spot is unparalleled, and this collection must come, we think, from a room in the palace which had served as a royal chancery: there are nine impressions from a seal bearing a scarab beetle with double wings [Figure 1 herein][2] and this seal, we conclude, belonged to an official in charge of the archives

[1] They are also brought up on p. 2 of *Samaria* 3 – see quotation in main text below.

[2] For example **(a)** *Samaria* 3: 88, no. 29, Qk 2338, pl. XV: 29 = IAA 33.3143, not illustrated herein; **(b)** *ibid.*: no. 30, Qk 2339, not illustrated in *Samaria* 3 = IAA 33.3148.

> of the kingdom; another seal bore a griffin with an ankh in front [Figure 2 herein];[3] on others there were traces of Hebrew letters [likely the just-mentioned Qk 2337 and Qk 2346, B.S. E.L.]; ... [W]e may infer that in Samaria also state documents were properly docketed and filed" (*Samaria* 3: 2).
>
> "It is the large number of seal impressions and the site where they were found which is of unique interest. There may well have been fragments of fifty or more on a single spot... The concentration of these in the area where most of the ivories were found suggests, as already stated, that a room was nearby in which the archives of the northern kingdom had been kept, a sort of chancery" (*Samaria* 3: 85).

Ron Tappy was in general agreement with John Crowfoot on the palatial Israelite origin of much of this rich assemblage, at the same time emphasizing further the secondary character of its deposition in what he labelled Pit i:[4]

> "In presenting the scarabs, seals, and seal impressions from Samaria, J. W. Crowfoot commented on the overall relative number of impressions found there and on the fact that they appeared concentrated "in the area where most of the ivories were found." These considerations led him to suggest that "a room was nearby in which the archives of the Northern Kingdom had been kept, a sort of chancery." Though the excavations in this area unfortunately remained bereft of epigraphic finds that might confirm this thesis, the only obvious candidate for such an official building rests in the series of better-built rooms situated along the northern edge of the central rock plateau, in the area I have called the "central summit." Whether or not one should see the famous "Ivory House" as a royal chancery, Crowfoot's general scenario concurs well with my view that the support staff working in the shabbier complex of rooms around Pit i served the courtiers of Samaria in basic, utilitarian capacities (such as food preparation ...) and that much of the material remains discovered in those rooms (including certain pottery forms, the ivories, the seal impressions, and the like) first appeared there already in a secondary context" (Tappy 2001: 299).

Figure 1. Uninscribed Samaria bulla Qk 2339, IAA 1933.3148 (by B. Sass, courtesy IAA).

Figure 2. Uninscribed Samaria bulla Qk 2343, IAA 1933.3145 (by B. Sass, courtesy IAA).

Differently put, the Northern Kingdom attribution of the glyptic finds, ivories and pottery from "Pit i" is by typology and by their origin in Samaria, not by context.

More from Tappy and his contemporaries

References in the scholarly literature are hardly explicit. Thus, while Tappy discussed the context (or its absence) of the assemblage of bullae, specific mention of the alphabetic items is missing from his work. The same is true of some earlier studies, e.g. Avigad 1976: 30. With a reference to *Samaria* 3: 2, 88, and pl. XV: 29, 30, and despite his being mentioned (as Mr Reiss) on the staff of the 1933 season (Crowfoot 1933: 129), Avigad remarked apropos the bullae that "[t]hough bearing ornamentation, none was inscribed". In Y. Shiloh's work (1986: 35; Shiloh and Tarler 1986: 205) traces of Hebrew letters on two of the bullae are mentioned, but only fleetingly. Undoubtedly such insufficiency is due to the lack of illustrations in *Samaria* 3.

The sole post-Crowfoot specialist we know to have actively sought, and located, the two bullae is Othmar Keel who, working on his *Corpus der Stempelsiegel-*

[3] *Samaria* 3: 88, no. 38, Qk 2343, pl. XV: 38 = IAA 33.3145.
[4] While not *in situ*, this assemblage was probably not moved far from its original location.

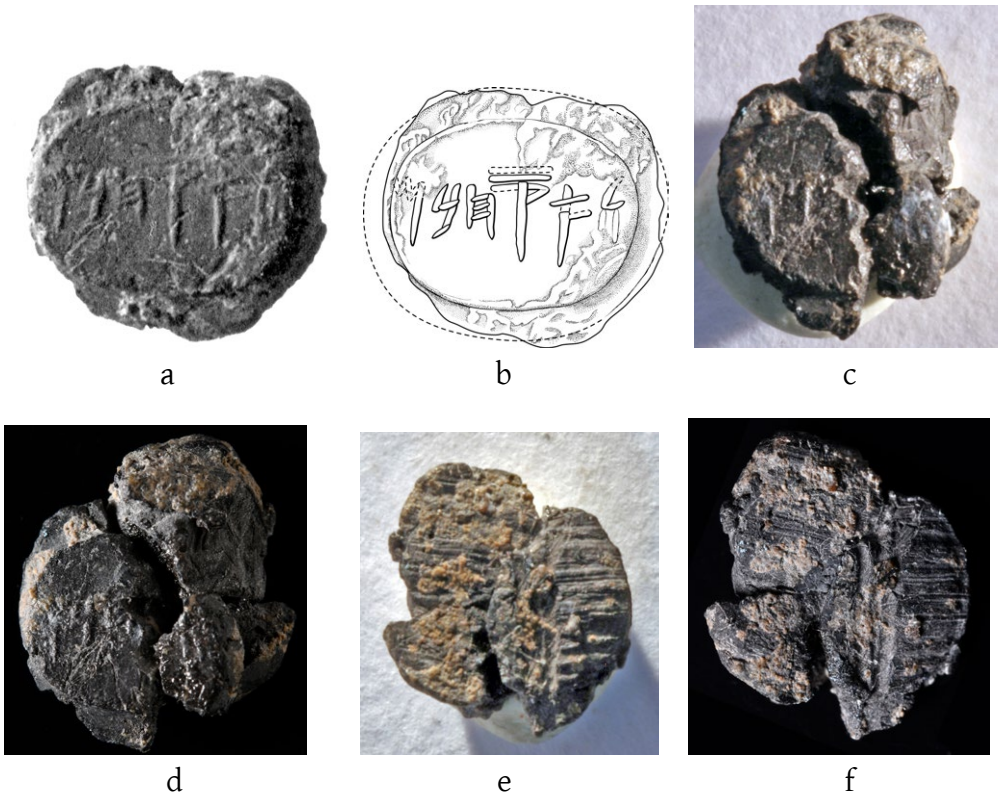


Figure 3a–f. Inscribed Samaria bulla Qk 2346, IAA 1933.3146 (courtesy IAA): a) obverse in the 1930s by unnamed Department of Antiquities photographer; b) ditto drawn in 2022 by Noga Z'evi; c) obverse in 2022 by B. Sass; d) ditto by Ivgeni Ostrovski; e) reverse in 2022 by B. Sass; f) ditto by Ivgeni Ostrovski.

Amulette aus Palästina/Israel in the 1980s and based on the *Samaria* 3 reference, documented bulla Qk 2346 at the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the whereabouts of Qk 2337, misattributed in the excavation report, were eventually traced to the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), London. As the Corpus section on Samaria has yet to be written, these two bullae, both of which we collated in 2022, are presented here for the first time.[5] Eventually Keel handed the task of completing the Corpus over to the Sinergia Project "Stamp Seals from the Southern Levant" at the University of Zurich, the University of Bern and Tel Aviv University, and it was one of us (Eythan Levy, member of the project), who spotted the documentation of the two bullae. Qk 2346 is published with the permission of the Israel Antiquities Authority, Qk 2337 courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Sinergia project co-director Stefan Münger has kindly given his consent to our availing ourselves of the Corpus documentation.[6]

Bulla Qk 2346 – inscribed *l'sḥnm*

- Samaria excavations 1933, field number Qk 2346. Jerusalem, IAA 1933.3146 (Figure 3).
- The bulla, 9 × 8 × 3 mm, is partly covered by concretions. The impression, 8 × 7 mm, reveals that the tiny seal was set in a metal mount (its groove is restored in Figure 3b). Papyrus and string imprints on the reverse (Figures 3e–f).
- Single-line border, perhaps obscured intermittently by the mount on the now-missing seal; one-line inscription.

In 2007, or before, the bulla was crushed (Figures 3c–f), with a note to that effect added in 2007 to the prior IAA documentation. Part of the legend survives,[7] but the mediocre Department of Antiquities photograph of the 1930s (Figure 3a) now serves perforce as the best source for studying the impression and its inscription. The reverse has not been photographed in the 1930s but,

[5] From 1980 to 1992 one of us (B.S.) was employed by the Israel Antiquities authority in the Rockefeller building and became acquainted with the glyptic and photographic collections housed there. Evidently the bulla in question and its photograph slipped under the radar. One result of this oversight is that bulla Qk 2346 does not figure in *WSS*. Nor does bulla Qk 2337. There was likewise no trace of the two bullae in Avigad's documentation, that Sass integrated into his own while preparing *WSS* for publication after Avigad's passing in 1992.

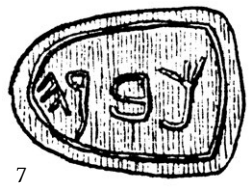
[6] We are most grateful to Alegre Savariego, Curator of the Rockefeller Collections at the IAA, and to Felicity Cobbing, Chief Executive and Curator of the PEF, for their encouragement and support, and for sharing their vast knowledge of their respective collections.

[7] Of the *lamed*, nothing remains after the shattering but the unexplained two parallel verticals, of the *alep* only the bottom end of the shaft. The *samek* is gone. The *ḥet*, *nun* and *mem* have deteriorated less.

4

5

6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8

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Figure 4. Unprovenanced seal of *ʾyʿdh*, modern impression (*WSS* 62).
Figure 5. Unprovenanced seal of *ṣpn*, modern impression (*WSS* 337).
Figure 6. Jar handle from Tel Dan impressed with the seal of *ʿmdyw* (*WSS* 692C).
Figure 7. Bulla from Tell Judeideh impressed with the seal of *kbrh* (WSS 536).
Figure 8. Jar handle from Tel Dan impressed with the seal of *zkryw* (*WSS* 669A).
Figure 9. Jar handle from Lachish impressed with the seal of *ʿbdy* (*WSS* 690).

despite the damage, papyrus and string imprints may be discerned in the new photographs.[8]

The impression

Layout. Aniconic Hebrew-inscribed seals of the eighth–seventh centuries bearing but a single personal name written in a single line within the oval border-line of an undivided field are uncommon. We can think of only two, the unprovenanced seals of *ʾyʿdh* (Figure 4) and *ṣpn* (Figure 5).[9] If a border line in the shape of an oval truncated on one side (cartouche-inspired?) is counted in, the official jar-handle impressions of *ʿmdyw* (Figure 6) from the Kingdom of Israel and the bulla of *kbrh* (Figure 7) from Tell Judeideh may be added. And when single names split into two lines within an undivided field are included, the official jar-handle impressions of *zkryw* (Figure 8) from the Kingdom of Israel and of *ʿbdy* (Figure 9) from Lachish would bring to six the total of seals represented.

Palaeography and orthography. The *alep* with parallel horizontals of unequal length (compare Figure 10) and *samek* with cursive-inspired tick on the right of the lower horizontal (compare Figure 11) indicate that the legend is written in the Hebrew alphabet-variant. The reading *lʾsḥnm,* "Belonging to *ʾsḥnm,*" is certain, even though the *lamed* , while found in its anticipated place, seems to possess two extra verticals. Yet as these can hardly constitute part of the engraving of the seal, could they form part of the post-impression concretions on the bulla? The *ḥet* and *nun* are clear. Much of the mem's shaft is visible, while its head is obscured. The letter is in no doubt, however, as the string *ʾsḥn* permits no completion other than *mem* for the personal name. We thus restored the *mem* after its Israelite eighth-century counterpart in Figure 6.

Dating by letter typology. The eighth century is a distinct possibility: seals with West Semitic legends unequivocally dated before are unknown (*WSS*: p. 50), and the abundance of glyptic finds and ivories from

[8] Curiously, the bulla is stated to be made of wax in the 1930s inventory card. The material is evidently clay.
[9] Bought in the 1930s, the seal of *ʾyʿdh* may well be genuine. Several more seals of the same layout are known (e.g. *WSS*: no. 332), all of them from the market and all bought in the 1970s or thereafter, when well-made forgeries became abundant (see the sample that J. Naveh presented in *WSS*: p. 12). Among these single-name and single-line items, the glass seal of *ṣpn*, weathered as it is, is perhaps less likely to be a forgery.

Figure 10. *Alep* parallel. Unprovenanced seal of *ʾbyw ʿbd ʿzyw*, Abiyau, an official of king Uzziah of Judah (769–733) (*WSS* 4). Known since 1858, the seal is likely genuine.

Figure 11. *Samek* parallel. Ajrud inscription 3.6 (courtesy Shmuel Ahituv; similar to Ahituv, Eshel and Meshel 2012: 97, fig. 5.39).

the fill (above) with which it was uncovered, renders the last century of the kingdom of Israel probable for our bulla. Yet as Samaria was inhabited in the seventh century, and as the fill contained also some later finds (e.g. Tappy 2001: 299–301), a subsequent dating of the inscribed bulla is not out of the question. It is less likely, however.

The name. The name *ʾsḥnm* is Egyptian, signifying "The one belonging to Khnum", Egyptian *nś-ḫnm* (*DNb*: 690). Other alphabetic transcriptions of Egyptian *nś* – Greek ασ or εσ, Latin *as* and Coptic ⲁⲥ – indicate that the *n* was assimilated to the following *s*, and a prosthetic *ʾ* or vowel added.[10] This is the first occurrence of the name in preexilic Hebrew, epigraphic or biblical.[11] Spelled plene, *ʾsḥnwm,* the name is repeated three times in Aramaic documents of the Persian period from Egypt (Kornfeld 1978: 77; Muchiki 1999: 68; Porten and Lund 2000: 324).

Background

Hebrews with Egyptian names are documented in the Bible and epigraphic sources (*WSS*: 543–544; Muchiki 1999), and our Askhnum or Eskhnum may have been of that lot. Yet he may equally have been an Egyptian who had dealings in the region and spent time in Samaria, in which case he could have had a Hebrew-inscribed seal made.[12] On such a person's conceivable background see for instance Cantrell and Finkelstein's 2006 proposal regarding Israel's role as intermediary in the horse trade between Egypt and Assyria.

Bulla fragment Qk 2337 – inscribed?

- Samaria excavations 1933, field number Qk 2337. London, PEF AO/3331 (Figure 12).
- The fragment measures 17 × 16 × 5 mm and it displays a segment of the impression 13 × 5 mm in size. No papyrus or string imprints on the reverse (Figure 12d).

The impression remnant and its surroundings

Collation of the original on 4 November 2022 revealed that the letters, or patterns in the impression are clearly in relief. (In the photographs they may appear sunk to some observers.)

But these meagre remnants do not suffice for reconstructing the original dimensions of the sealing surface, nor its orientation or layout, while still showing that the seal was set in a metal mount.[13]

[10] Spiegelberg 1906: 1096–1097, 1111–1112; Muchiki 1999: 67; Quack 2004: 118; Theis 2020: 2.

[11] Compare אָסְנַת in Gen 41: 45, 50; 46: 20, LXX Ἀσενέθ or Ἀσεννέθ, Vulg. Aseneth, transcribing Egyptian *Nś-Nı̓.t*, "The one belonging to Neith".

[12] Comparable (though not identical) questions may be asked about the owner of a cylinder seal, an impression of which was uncovered on a Tell Sheikh Hamad tablet dated to 634 BCE. That seal bore an Akkadian name, Adad-tabni-uṣur, spelled *hdtbnṣr* in an Arabian alphabet (Sass 2015).

[13] The raised line visible on the inside of the mount imprint, touching the perimeter of the seal impression, could be what remains of a single-line border.

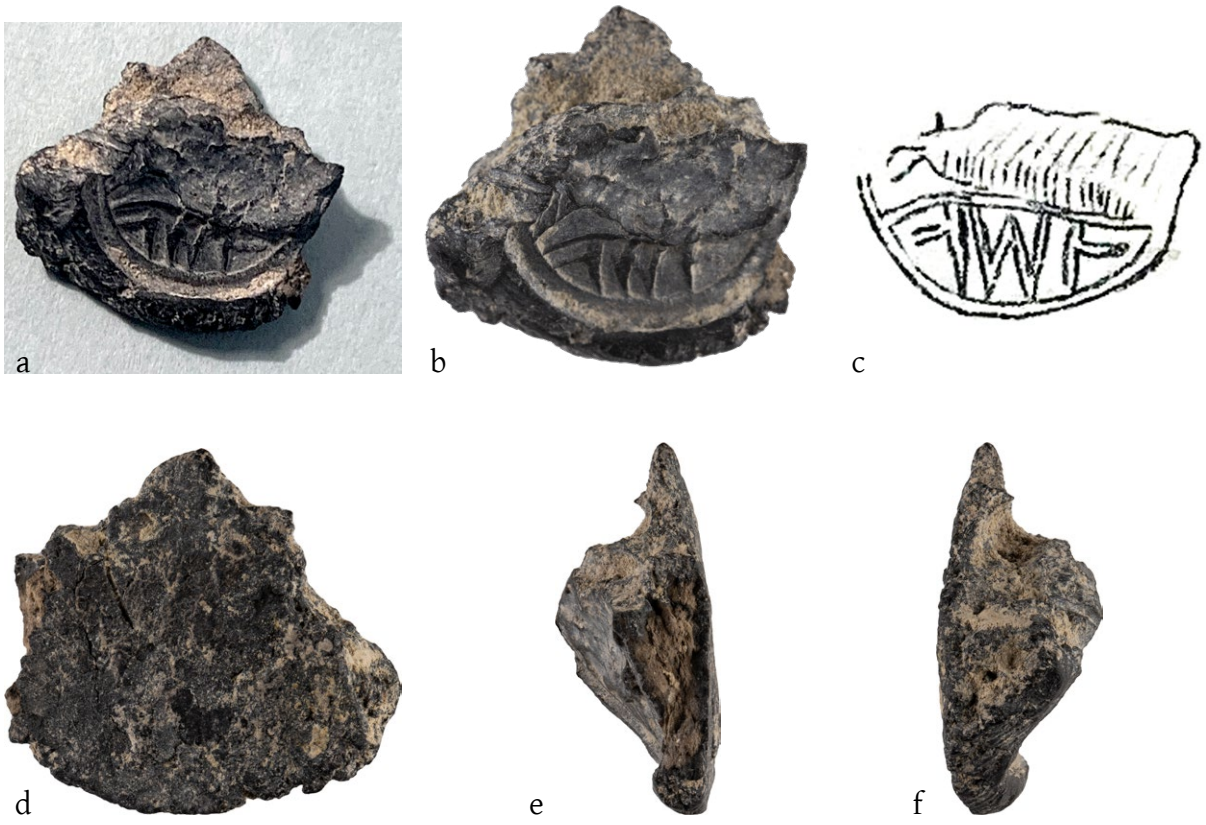

Figure 12a–f. Inscribed(?) Samaria bulla Qk 2337, PEF AO.3331 (courtesy PEF): a) obverse by Felicity Cobbing; b) obverse by Ben Greet; c) obverse from excavation register; d) reverse by Ben Greet; e, f) side views by Ben Greet.

A first glance at the images of the impression – photographs and the sketch in the excavation register (Figures 12a–c) may lead one to visualize an exergue enclosing three letters of the West Semitic, presumably Hebrew, alphabet. Yet there is no exergue and the letters are in doubt. No straight line delimits the presumed top of the exergue, but a wavy one, and this line, that in some photographs might look part of the impression, is something else according to other photographs and in particular the original bulla: to all appearances the soft bulla was folded over, and the two flaps squeezed together before the bulla was discarded, possibly because it was mis-impressed. The wavy line, a kind of step higher than the impressed area, seems to us to be the edge of the top flap, hiding part of the impression underneath. (Again, this is most clearly visible on the original, less in Figures 12a, b, e, f).

And regarding the impressed signs or pattern – on its own the central W shape might pass for a West Semitic *shin,* yet this is uncertain, especially as the flanking shapes are not obvious letters (Figures 12a, b, each taken in different angles of lighting): Reading *ʾšr* has the advantage of yielding a familiar string, that is moreover already attested at Samaria.[14] As to the bulla, such guesses may be unwarranted altogether. We hesitate about the very restoration of the shape on the right as an *alep*, and even more the shape on the left as a *resh*.[15] Could they be an optical illusion, due to the small portion that survives? Could these shapes be other letters, components of the imagery, or imitation of Egyptian hieroglyphs in a symmetrical arrangement? Not knowing how the rest of the impression looked like, nor even sure how it was oriented, we prefer this unexciting wrap-up to speculating further.[16]

[14] Cf. a fragment of a limestone monument (Ahituv 2008: 257; Sass 2014: note 57).
[15] Crowfoot may have hesitated too: "Traces apparently of three letters" (*Samaria* 3: 88).
[16] This is also why we refrained from attempting a drawing.

Abbreviations used

DNb	Lüddeckens E., H.-J. Thissen, W. Brunsch, G. Vittmann and K.-Th. Zauzich 2000.
Samaria 3	Crowfoot J.W., G.M. Crowfoot and K.M. Kenyon 1957.
WSS	Avigad N. and B. Sass 1997.

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Chapter 11:
The impact of models and prototypes in carving and sculpturing. How craftspeople referred to prototypes and conventions. Two various examples

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Abstract. In the course of examining hundreds of objects from Palestine/Israel on the one hand and neighbouring cultures on the other during the work on *IPIAO* 4 (Schroer 2018),[1] there were observations that could not easily be made by devices even in the age of sophisticated programs. They are reserved for the searching and discerning eye that registers and evaluates similarities. From among many examples, two are presented in the following, a bone or ivory spoon and a ceramic plaque, both informative for questions of craftmanship, but each in a different manner.

Keywords: ivory carving, Nimrud ivories, Late Hittite relief art, craftmanship, weather god, warrior.

Two different discoveries will be focused on in the following, as they could not find the attention they deserve in the published *IPIAO* volume. Both possibly shed light on the process of how a craftsperson arrived at the representation of a figure or a more complex motif. The two objects in question, a carved bone or ivory spoon from Beth-zur in the Judean hill country and a ceramic plaque from Jordan (Tall al-Ziraʿa), have not received due attention from researchers to date, perhaps partly due to fluctuating information on their dating. In the case of the carved spoon, a craftsman apparently had before them or knew a strongly standardized, but not completely stereotyped motif on image carriers of similar material, namely ivory plaques. Attempting an own design, not all details succeeded. In the case of the ceramic plaque, I try to prove the strong influences of representational conventions, especially those of the Syrian/Hittite relief art. In this case we are concerned with models and a creative transfer into another material, from the monumental art of important sites into the transportable small-scale art, which played an important role in the dissemination of representational conventions.

While example 1 might show how an apprentice learned elementary skills by imitating a model on the same material, example 2 sheds light on the freer handling of traditional specifications, presumably of large-scale art, by someone who was already advanced.

A carved cosmetic spoon from Beth-zur: The work of a beginner

The first example comes from ivory or bone carving.[2] At Beth-zur, about 30 km south of Jerusalem in the Judean hill country, a fragmentary cosmetic spoon (preserved height 5.8 cm) was found during early excavations (Figure 1a-b).

According to the excavators, Ḫirbet eṭ-Ṭubēqa was a fortified site in the Middle Bronze Age, sparsely occupied until Iron Age I, and an unfortified settlement from Iron Age II. The find spot of the object among Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age sherds is of little help in providing clues to its origin or manufacture. The excavation reports indicate bone as the material. However, whether it is bone or ivory would have to be verified on the original. The spoon was dated to the Middle Bronze Age by the excavators of the time[3] and associated with the Hyksos. However, carved ivory spoons or bowls with wide handles in the cosmetic field did not appear until the Egyptian New Kingdom.[4] Peter Welten (1977: 262 fig. 69.4), following Louis-Hugues Vincent (1934: 317), has therefore preferred a later dating and pointed to typologically comparable pieces such as the better-known anointing spoon from Hazor (*IPIAO* 4: no. 1567) as well as another from Nimrud (Mallowan 1966 II: fig. 529). Today the dating is no more a matter of discussion (Genz 2022: 713 no. 1). Whether the object was made in Beth-zur or how it got there, we do not know in the

[1] In this paper, the total of four volumes "The Iconography of Palestine/Israel and the Ancient Near East. Eine Religionsgeschichte in Bildern" are cited with the abbreviation IPIAO, the volume number and the continuous catalog numbers, in the bibliography see Schroer and Keel 2005; Schroer 2008, 2011 and 2018.

[2] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1440. Rockefeller Museum, IAA 31.58; Sellers 1933: 57 fig. 48, 58 fig. 49; Stern 1995: 324 fig. 3.

[3] Sellers and Albright 1931: 5; Sellers 1933: 57; much later joined by Keel and Küchler 1982: 719 Abb. 463.

[4] Since the 18th dynasty there are among them those that resemble the contemporary Egyptian mirrors (British Museum EA5975; Metropolitan Museum 1994.70).

Figure 1a–b. Fragmentary cosmetic spoon from Beth-zur, Rockefeller Museum © Israel Antiquities Authority.

end. But it shows that prestigious objects of ivory art of the 9th–8th century were also popular in smaller places and were probably made locally. In any case, there are indications that the artisan who carved this spoon had not yet reached mastery. He oriented himself to better models, some details are not successful.[5]

The fragmentary spoon (h 5.8 cm; w 2.7 cm) shows a beardless man with an Egyptian curly hairstyle or wig striding to the left. One arm hangs down resting against the body, the other arm has been raised forward by the striding man, and the index finger appears to be extended to point at something. The man wears jewelry on his wrists, probably bracelets. He is seemingly clothed, because a rectangular cutout of a robe is indicated at the neck. If a robe is to be implied, the hoop-like decorations on the upper arms and around the abdomen are not jewelry, but the sleeve borders and robe belt. The body and face are partially roughly cut. In the area of the lower body there are some details that are not recognizable or identifiable, such as between the legs in the area of the loins a strange triangle. Below the knees, a diagonal line is identifiable, and in front of the lower body, a volute-like structure. The patterning between the legs and in the volute-like structure are an indication that these parts belong together. In front of the striding man a papyrus flower on a high stem can be seen.

While the pose of the man with the outstretched finger reminds at first sight of the incantatory gesture *ubāna tarāṣu*, the lower part of the figure gives great puzzles.

[5] A piece very similar to the spoon from Beth-zur seems to have been offered at an auction some time ago. Apart from a photo, however, no details can be found. The head is less Egyptianized than on the piece from Beth-zur, the striding position, skirt and overskirt are better matched. The raised fist holds a long flower stalk. What the drooping hand is holding is not discernible. https://fineartamerica.com/featured/egyptian-ivory-cosmetic-spoon-photostock-israel.html

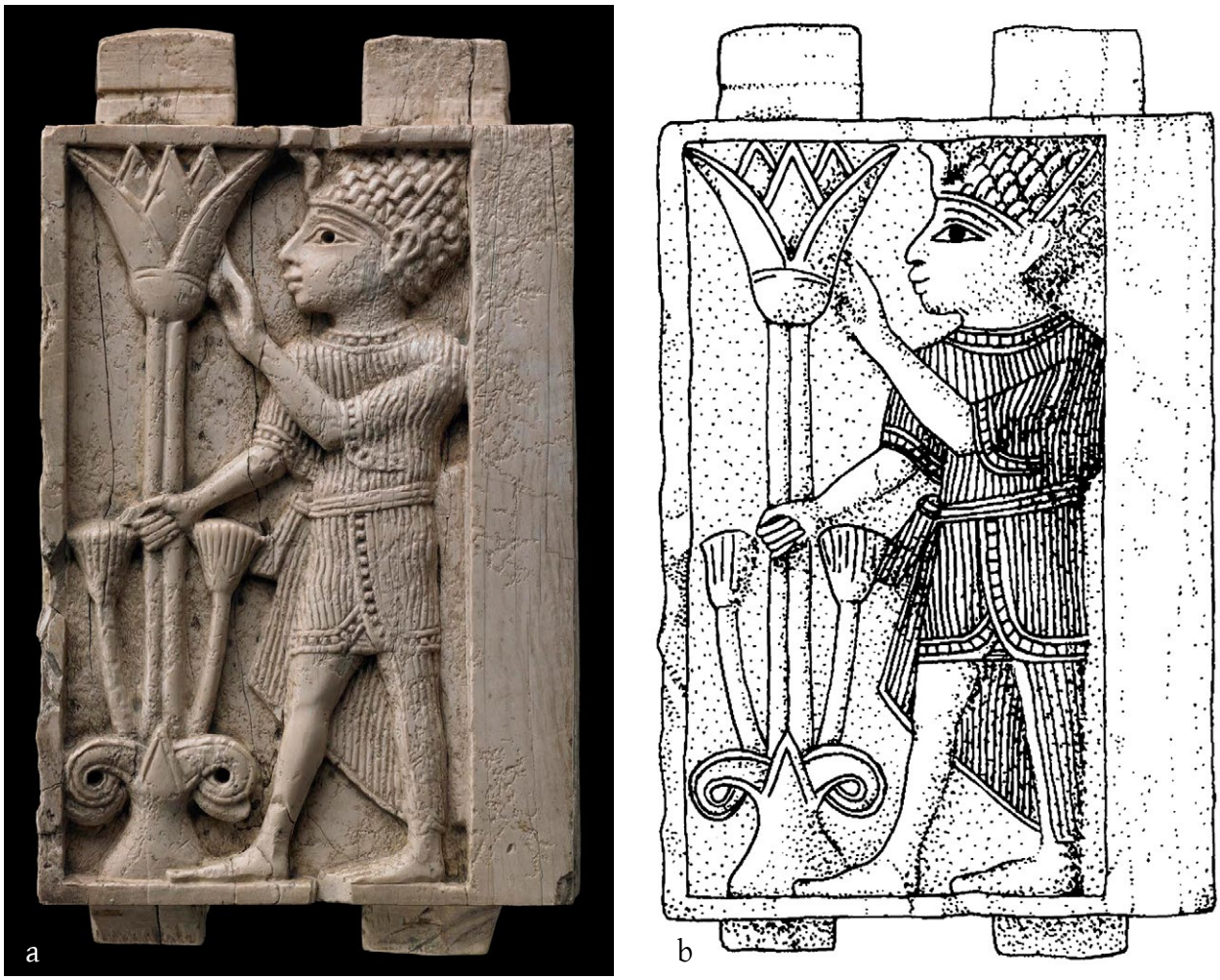

Figure 2a–b. Ivory plaque from Nimrud, London, British Museum, BM 118147. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Possible templates of the craftsman

A comparison with ivory carvings from Nimrud at least partially solves this puzzle. There, youthful, sometimes Egyptianizing ruler figures in beautiful dresses are more frequently found on artificial flowers and stylized trees. The selected example[6] (Figure 2a-b) shows the royal holding a lotus blossom with his right hand, which seems to rise from a volute capital together with two papyrus blossoms. The left hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. The man wears a pleated robe with wide half-length sleeves, a short skirt and a longer overskirt. A belt or cord apparently holds the lower and upper garments together, with a knot visible in front of the abdomen and at the side, respectively. The robe is marked by wave-like stripes. Beautiful borders are highlighted on the neck, sleeves, skirt lapels and hems. The skirt and overskirt date back to the traditional dress of the Egyptian king, as he liked to wear it during ceremonial acts in the Ramesside period (*IPIAO* 3: nos. 604, 646).

The carver of Beth-zur probably copied models such as the piece from Nimrud. He did not succeed in designing the garment, so that only the diagonal line between the legs and the strange volute in front of his belly indicate what may have been the original intention of the craftsman. The triangle looks as if it has slipped up too high. It could indicate the area of the crotch or part of the short skirt. Certainly, the patterned area between the legs and in front of the striding man is actually the long overskirt, which on the ivories from Nimrud usually ends in a slanted hem at the bottom.

The raised hand also seems to have caused problems for the carver. The outstretched index finger could be due to a misinterpretation. For the invocative prayer gesture *ubāna tarāṣu*, known from Assyrian art and text sources, with which worshippers approach a deity, seems thematically somewhat odd on the cosmetic spoon with its regeneration symbolism. It is probable that the craftsman was unable to reproduce correctly in

[6] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1441. From Nimrud, London, British Museum, BM 118147. Decamps de Mertzenfeld 1954: pl. 111 no. 988; Herrmann *et al.* 2009: pl. 17 no. 102.

his own work the gesture of the slender hand extended in blessing, as seen on the Phoenician ivory. Or it was intended that the figure should hold another flower stalk in the raised fist (*IPIAO* 4: no. 1661). The hand hanging down also shows a peculiarity, namely a finger, perhaps thumb, which seems to be stretched out. This might be a misunderstanding as well, because in the down-hanging hand an ankh -sign is occasionally found with Egyptian or Egyptianizing notables (see Herrmann 1992: pl. 84 no. 401 ND 10591).

Local carving craft

The worked object from Beth-zur is – in comparison with the abovementioned spoon from Hazor – small, but about the same size as the ivory plaque from Nimrud. Unlike the majority of ivory works from Nimrud, the spoon from Beth-zur is not worked in raised relief, but only incised. If the material were bone, this would possibly indicate that it was a practice piece or a learner's piece. The craftsman worked – not entirely successfully – in incised technique the material available to him on site. In Judah, for example on the Ophel in Jerusalem, there was an already older, especially Iron Age IIA tradition of working bone platelets (Naeh 2015a: esp. 597 and 2015b).[7] The Beth-zur find, after a more detailed examination of the original in the Rockefeller Museum, would be included in recent research of the ivory working tradition.[8] If there was a local carving craft (bone, ivory, wood) in the southern Levant, but it did not produce "local style", the spoon from Beth-zur should be of interest. The object, possibly the material, and certainly the attempt to transfer a motif of the ivory plaques, as we know it from Nimrud, in incising technique, hopefully gives further information for the history of the local production of this craft.

A ceramic plaque with the figure of a warrior: Transfer from monumental art to small art?

A plaque of reddish pottery with light brown slip (h 19.1 cm; w 12.5 cm; d 2.5 cm) was found on Tall Zira'a in Jordan (Figure 3a-c).[9] The surface find in a room near a workshop area, in an Early Iron Age find context (Area I, Stratum 13), depicts a beardless man striding to the right, wearing a short, wrapped pleated skirt. His ankles as well as arms, wrists and neck are adorned by decorative bands or hoops. A pendant, perhaps in the shape of a pomegranate, is attached to the neck ornament. It cannot be ruled out that the man is also wearing an overgarment. In this case, the upper bangles would not be jewelry, but the patterned hems of the short sleeves of the shirt-like dress. On his head he wears a headdress described as a cap (Gropp 2013: 481). What looks like the band of the cap could alternatively be a kind of ring-shaped diadem, perhaps with a uraeus or animal head originally emblazoned on the front above the forehead, as there may be more than just the slip damaged at this point. The hair reaching down to the nape of the neck is artfully braided at the back and top. The man's upper body is proportionally too large compared to the lower body. It is turned almost into the frontal position, with the man having one arm raised high backward and the other arm bent and somewhat extended forward at chest level. With the arm raised backward, the fist encloses a cavity in the plaque; with the front arm, the hand is closed into a fist.[10] The hollow space was suitable for the insertion of a thin stick, perhaps a metallic weapon, perhaps a twig. Four free-standing men's heads with pronounced faces have been drawn in the clay in the empty spaces around the main figure, two on top of each other on the left, two on the right below and above the bent arm.[11] All faces are aligned with the figure of the man in the center. The main figure has been worked out – by hand, not from the model – in raised relief and with quite a bit of detail, but the free-floating heads are only incised. Although the physiognomy of the faces is partly precisely worked out, the carvings nevertheless appear unfinished. To conclude from this that they were subsequently carved is not compelling.

The ceramic plaque is probably a locally made, not an imported product. The find location, according to Gropp (2013: 480) north of an artisan area, is hardly an indication that the plaque was produced in this area. That it is a mere practice piece in the sense of a study is unlikely, because a use was quite obviously intended. The plaque could be placed with the help of a small recess on the back. Craftsman sites and (temple) cult often have close connections, and on Tall Zira'a such connections are attested at one of the Late Bronze Age temples (Gropp 2013: 903). It cannot be ruled out that the ceramic plaque was made by a craftsman on site and then brought directly to the sanctuary as a votive offering by him or a patron, but it is more likely that workers or residents had placed the image in these premises.

[7] Even older are the finds of incised ivory inlays from Hazor (Ben-Tor 2009) or Ekron (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006); cf. *IPIAO* 3: no. 765; *IPIAO* 4: no. 1115.

[8] Cf. in particular the work of Claudia Suter (2015 and 2022; cf. also Suter and Uehlinger 2005). The design of the motif on the spoon perhaps points to the works that, according to Suter (last 2022: 550), are better described not as Southern Levantine style, but Levantine-3 group. Not only is comparatively lower quality (compared to Levantine-1–2) cited as characteristic of these, but also a failure to understand or the misunderstanding of Egyptian realia. Suter assumes that these pieces were made in the course of the 8th century under politically and economically poor conditions. Among the finds from Samaria there are also carvings in the Levantine-3 group.

[9] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1341. Ceramic plaque from Tall Zira'a; Gropp 2013: 480–481 TZ 018181-001.
Cf. on the find context and some details of the description and interpretation Soennecken 2017: 354–358.

[10] Gropp 2013: 481.501.535; Soennecken 2017: 354; Häser and Schmidt 2019: 246–247 Cat. no. 73.

[11] Häser and Schmidt (2019: 246–247 Cat. no. 73) speak of five carved heads. A fifth head may have been sketched on the back of the plaque, but it is not visible in the photos.

Figure 3a–c. Ceramic plaque from Tall Zira'a. © Biblisch Archäologisches Institut Wuppertal/DEI Jerusalem und Amman; Zeichnung Ernst Brückelmann.

Although the ceramic plaque is reminiscent in form of Old Babylonian ceramic plaques (Gropp 2013: 482–484), the find context, the motif, and its execution suggest a dating to the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age. In the following, the search for comparable representations from these periods will provide clues as to who is depicted on the plaque.

The short wraparound skirt and the pose of the man suggest a fighter. The weapon is missing, but it may have been inserted into the small hole of the raised fist. The striding pose appears slightly moved, not static. The man could have been striding over (indicated) stones with his bare feet. The many pieces of jewelry - hoops around the neck, on the arms and wrists, and on the ankles – are unusual for a fighter in action. They identify him as a high-ranking personage and possibly indicate that the focus is not on the fighting, but on its result, the role of a sovereign. The attributes or characteristics for a god are missing, but one must not exclude this possibility.

Who is depicted? A comparison with figures of the so-called late Hittite relief art

Which figure in which pose or during which action did the artisan want to depict? The pose of the arm can give the most information, but it does not solve all the riddles.

The man on the ceramic plaque shows some similarities with fighters and with weather or storm gods on the so-called Late Hittite or Aramaic/North Syrian reliefs, especially from Tell Halaf. The type of weather gods, with and without bull, wielding a weapon in the raised hand and fighting a snake or wielding a scepter with an outstretched arm, goes back to the Old Syrian tradition, which will not be further discussed here.[12] Both the ancient Syrian weather gods and their later successors are almost always bearded,[13] wearing horned helmets and often a long hanging band or braid of hair at the back of their headgear. Some are girded with a dagger. The striding pose, the representation of the upper body and especially the posture of the arms of the weather gods of the North Syrian / Anatolian relief art correspond very closely to the pose of the man on the ceramic plaque. This is already true for the storm god of Aleppo, as he can be seen on the monumental

[12] The famous stele of the weather god from Ugarit (*IPIAO* 2: no. 483) is a prototype of monumental art, probably already from the Middle Bronze Age. A small Late Bronze Age limestone stele from Ugarit depicts a bearded god with horned helmet and wraparound skirt in a comparable pose (*IPIAO* 3: no. 916). His hands, however, are without weapons, the raised hand is a closed fist. The dagger on the belt is also missing.

[13] A beardless warrior with a spear held very close to his body is depicted on the monumental basalt stele from the Ǧebel Šiḥān (de Saulcy 1853: pl. 18; Warmenbol 1983: pl. 6), now in the Louvre. Except for their beardlessness and their youthful martial habitus, the figures on the incomplete basalt stele and on our ceramic plaque share no similarities. Hunziker-Rodewald and Deutsch (2014) have identified without doubt the remains of a monkey originally sitting on the man's head on the original object. They assign the figure to the topos of Egyptian or Nubian tribute bearers accompanied by monkeys, which are iconographically attested in the later Iron Age II (2014: 65–67). Thus, the Moabite basalt stele has to be omitted as a comparative piece in the tradition of militant weather gods.

limestone slab (h 200 cm)[14] dated to the 14th–13th century BCE in the citadel temple there (Figure 4). Both arms are raised almost equally high and unarmed, so that the posture of the god expresses sovereign triumph rather than active combat, and even appears slightly dancelike. In the later, so-called Late Hittite art, the god is more often embedded scenically and is depicted as a chaos fighter in action. An orthostatic relief from Karkemish shows such a fighting god, who swings an axe in his raised right hand and pulls up a lion by the hind leg with his bent left hand. The lion is given the dagger thrust by the god's assistant, perhaps the ruler[15] (Figure 5). Despite the combative events the god walks calmly along.[16] Comparable is the pose of the weather god, who fights a horned snake, on a three-sided worked stele from the area of the ancient Terqa[17] on the Middle Euphrates (Figure 6). The right arm with the axe swings out to strike, the left seizes the beast at the neck. The god conquers the snake at eye level, so to speak, he is supported by a priest and the ruler. A monumental basalt stele from Arsuz (Turkey)[18] shows the god, assisted by the king, somewhat less combative, but in the same pose, with a branch in the raised hand and the trident in the outstretched left (Figure 7).

Very similar is the arm posture of many weather gods standing in a triumphant pose on a bull. The monumental basalt stele from Tel Aḥmar/Til Barsip[19] (Figure 8) shows a weather god wielding an axe in his raised right hand while holding his trident with his bent arm extended forward. This type occurs, for example, on the "long wall of sculpture" at Carchemish (Orthmann 2013: 528 fig. 288) and on numerous stelae even without his bull. In most cases, the fists with the axe and the trident have been worked into the stone in great detail. From a later phase of late Hittite art comes the stele from Gözlühüyük (Turkey). The pose and armament of this weather god are traditionally the same as in older representations[20] (Figure 9). The headgear, however, resembles an Egyptian atef crown and is decorated in front by a uraeus with a sun disk.[21]

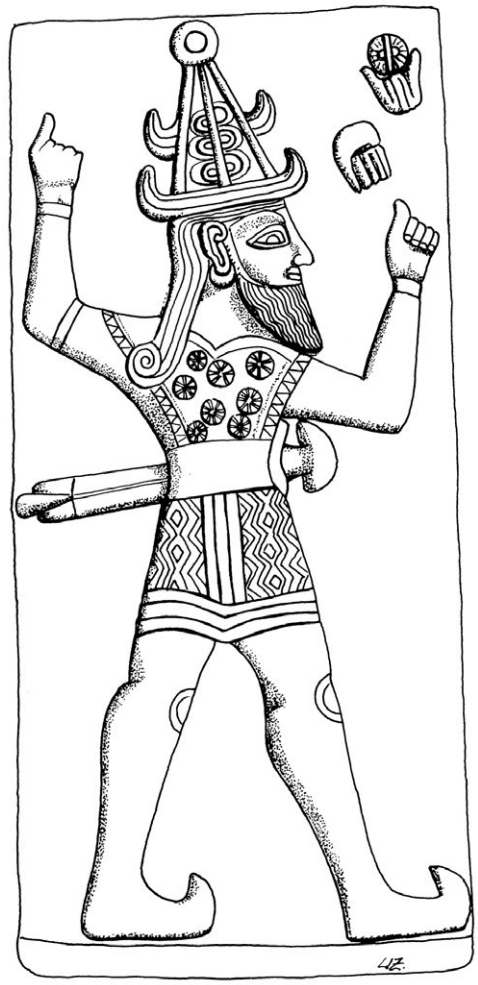

Figure 4. Limestone orthostat from the citadel temple in Aleppo. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

It is conceivable that a spear or lance thrower should be depicted. The target of his attack would be thought outside the area of the plaque, the raised rear arm guides the shaft of the weapon, the front arm is raised at an angle. The front hand embraces the shaft of the weapon, which is not depicted, above the tip of the weapon (to be thought of), as in the case of the spear thrower on a basalt relief from Tell Halaf[22] (Figure 10). The weather gods also appear as lance fighters, as on a large limestone stele from Malatya (Turkey), where the god Karhuha on the lion pays his respects to the goddess Kubaba enthroned on a bull[23] (Figure 11). In the raised right hand he leads the lance, whose tip is aligned with the head of his carrier animal. The outstretched hand seems to hold the trident.

[14] *IPIAO* 3: no. 981. Gonnella, Khayyata and Kohlmeyer 2005: 92 fig. 124.
[15] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1329. London, British Museum, BM 118998; Orthmann 1971: taf. 26b Karkemis E/3.
[16] With an axe in his raised hand and a spear in his outstretched hand, a lion fighter without divine attributes is depicted on a relief from Sakçagözü (Orthmann 1971: pl. 51 Sakçagözü B/1). A soldier who in turn stabs the lion with a spear supports the fighter.
[17] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1315. Aleppo, National Museum, 3065; Orthmann 1971: taf. 5a Ashara 1.
[18] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1316. Hatay, Archaeology Museum, Arsuz Stele 1; Dinçol 2015: figs. 5–6.
[19] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1313. Aleppo, National Museum, M 11611; Bunnens 2006: 140 fig. 7 and 141 fig. 8.
[20] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1611. Gaziantep, Museum of Archaeology; Bunnens 2006: 159 fig. 66 cat. 11.
[21] This also applies to the god on a lion striding over mountains on a stele from the area of Amrit from the Babylonian–Persian period. He grasps a small lion in his outstretched hand. The god is beardless. He wears no jewelry, but a well-arranged robe with overskirt (Berlejung 2022: 495 fig. 3).
[22] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1342. Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, TH B 1487; Moortgat and von Oppenheim 1955: taf. 16a A 3,14.
[23] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1319. Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 10304; Orthmann 1971: taf. 42f Malatya B/4.

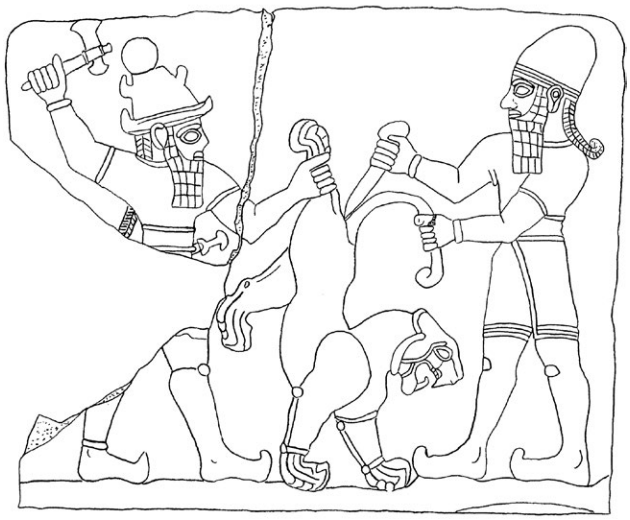

Figure 5. Broken basalt relief from Karkemisch. London, British Museum, BM 118998. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

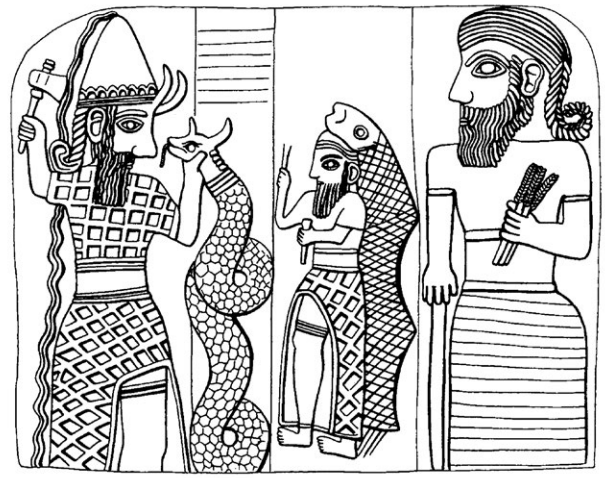

Figure 6. Basalt stele from Tel Ashara. Aleppo, National Museum, 3065. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

Figure 7. Basalt stele from Arsuz. Hatay, Archaeology Museum. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

Figure 8. Basalt stele from Tell Aḥmar/Til Barsip. Aleppo, National Museum, M 11611. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

Figure 9. Basalt stele from Gözlühüyük. Gaziantep, Museum of Archaeology. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

Figure 10. Basalt relief from Tell Halaf. Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, TH B 1487. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag

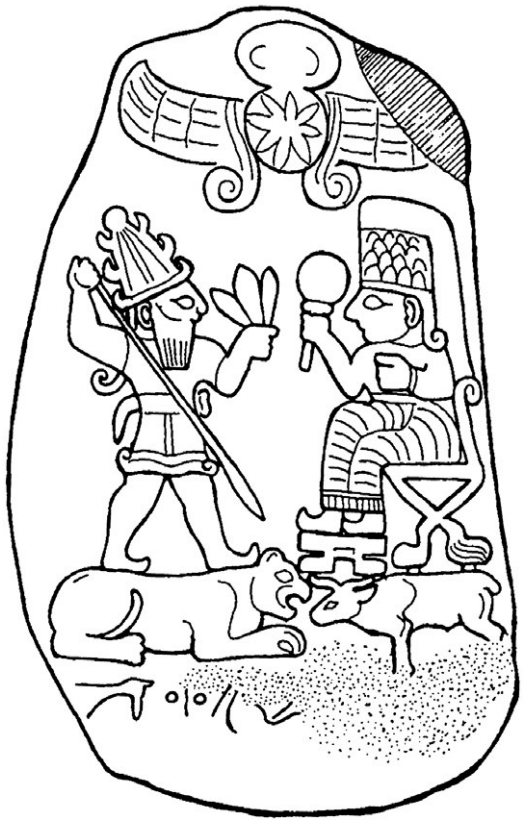

Figure 11. Limestone stele from Malatya. Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 10304. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

The possibility of the representation of an archer is certainly ruled out, since for the tension of the arrow in the bow the front arm must be completely stretched. The back and front hands are usually at exactly the same height. The rear arm is strongly bent, the rear hand with the arrow is often at the neck, while the front, stretched arm fixes the bow.[24]

The posture of the figure on the ceramic plaque could speak for a stone slinger (so Schroer 2018: 388), but the hole in the fist for inserting a weapon with a shaft speaks against it. A basalt relief from Tell Halaf (Figure 12) depicts a man running to the right, using his slingshot with his arms raised high.[25] The fingers of the back hand, which is close to the back of the slinger's head, are to be noted. The front arm is raised, but not fully extended. In the rear arm of the man on the ceramic plaque, the force appears to be slightly pulling, and the upper body appears to be leaning backward rather than

[24] Cf. the archer on a relief from Tell Halaf (*IPIAO* 4: no. 1339; Moortgat and von Oppenheim 1955: pl. 11b A3,4).

[25] *IPIAO* 4: no. 1340. British Museum, BM 117103; Moortgat and von Oppenheim 1955: taf. 18a A3,18; Cholidis and Martin 2002: 20 Abb.19. Catapults did not exist in antiquity, as they require a rubber band. In the ancient slingshot the projectile was set in motion by rotation. Depicted is the moment when the shooter fixes the stone in the sling, tightens the rope, and then sets the projectile spinning with his back hand. By swinging and releasing the tension, the stone will fly towards the opponent.

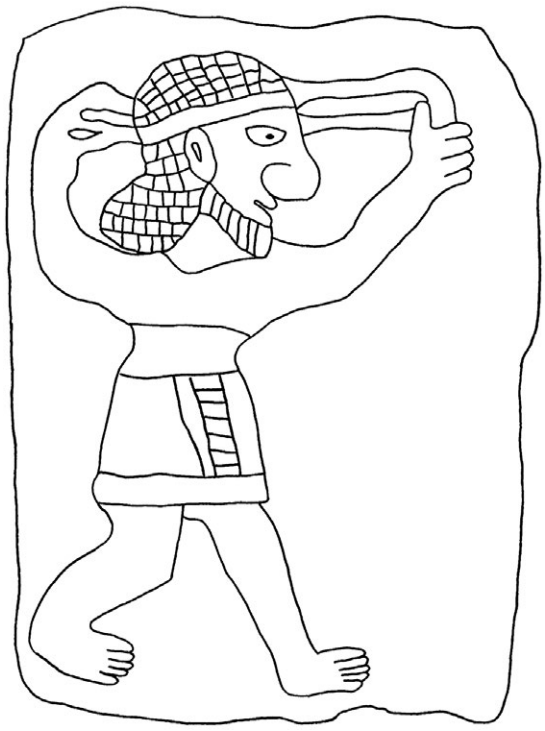

Figure 12. Basalt relief from Tell Halaf. British Museum, BM 117103. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

forward, but this could also be the case when lunging to throw a lance. The short wraparound skirt of the warrior resembles that of the stone slinger from Tell Halaf. The foot in front is slightly elevated compared to the one behind.[26] The hairstyle of our warrior resembles the typical hair puff and headband of various warriors on the reliefs from Tell Halaf.

If one places the man on the ceramic plaque from Tall Zira'a iconographically in the series of the aforementioned comparative pieces, then it is most likely to be a high-ranking warrior, perhaps the ruler, who appears triumphantly in the manner of a weather god. The way of depiction and some details put the figure close to North Syrian/Anatolian figures. It cannot be excluded that it is a god despite the lack of attributes. Possibly a small weapon made of metal was put into the hole of the raised fist, probably an axe, possibly a lance. A branch would also be conceivable, but the four carved heads on the plaque speak rather for a weapon directed against the (four) enemies.

[26] A stone slinger on one of the reliefs from Tell Halaf (Moortgat and von Oppenheim 1955: plate 20a) also adopts this striding posture.

Four heads in the Egyptian tradition of enemy depictions

The four heads, since they reveal different physiognomies, are likely to represent four "enemy types" in Egyptian tradition. Heads of enemies are readily depicted in Egyptian tradition as symbolic evocations of their destruction, with the "foreign" emphasized by hairstyle and/or physiognomy. The number four or nine symbolically represents the claim to dominance over a totality of "hostile" peoples.[27] In particular, the incised heads show similarities to the bearded and beardless faces and hairstyles of the bound enemies on the colored glazed tiles of the Ramesside period, such as those found at Tell el-Yahudiye in the Delta[28] (Figure 13) and also at Medinet Habu.[29] On the other hand, the main figure on the ceramic plaque from Tall Zira'a does not show any identifying features of an Egyptian ruler or god. In the classical act of smiting

Figure 13. Polychrome faience tile. Paris, Louvre, E 7691. © S. Schroer and Schwabe Verlag.

[27] Cf. the alabaster pedestal of four "foreigners' heads" (*IPIAO* 1: no. 140; Munich, Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst: ÄS 6300). Cf. also the enemy heads or bundles of enemies on relief depictions (*IPIAO* 3: nos. 563, 619, 626; *IPIAO* 4: nos. 1026, 1032, 1033, 1037). The theme of seizing the enemy by the scruff of the neck occurs on Late Hittite reliefs (*IPIAO* 4: no. 1337).

[28] *IPIAO* 3: no. 616. Paris, Louvre, E 7691. Hein 1994: 80 colour plate; 277 no. 386.

[29] Hayes 1937; Leclant 1980: fig.120f; Aruz 2008: nos. 168a–d.

enemies, the Egyptian king is always depicted slightly bent over and striding far out, as he usually grabs an opponent crouching on the ground. The posture of the raised arm and the angle of the outstretched arm on our plaque do correspond to the pose of Reshef on Late Bronze Age stelae when he raises one arm backward, wielding the spear or mace, while the forward, bent arm holds the shield (Cornelius 1994: pl.9; cf. *IPIAO* 3: nos. 873.923). Recognition signs of the god Reshef are however just as little to be made out with the man on the ceramic plaque as those of a Pharao.

The four heads place the meaning of the main figure on the plaque undoubtedly in the context of warlike power and rule. The warrior takes the pose of a divine chaos fighter. The conquered size is not a wild animal or a mythical snake, but the multitude of threatening opponents.

Conclusion

The find situation and the singularity of the object - ceramic plaques of this kind with a similar motif are unknown to date – make it difficult to answer the question of the connection between the plaque from Tall Ziraʿa and (Late) Hittite relief art. The excavators prefer a Late Bronze Age dating of the piece as heirloom to its assignment to the Early Iron Age find context. The monumental stele from the Aleppo Citadel Temple is older than the other orthostats and stelae listed. The craftsman from Tall Ziraʿa could have been guided by such a well-known cult image in a supra-regionally important sanctuary. He depicts the (local) ruler in the iconographic tradition of weather gods, as we know them in large numbers from Late Hittite reliefs and stelae, which, however, date later (10th–9th century BCE). The craftsman adheres to traditional guidelines for the posture of the central figure. Details such as the man's hairstyle and jewelry, however, do not come from this tradition. The craftsman may also have known Egyptian representations. The Egyptian tiles with prisoners whose heads resemble the carved heads on the plaque point to a Late Bronze Age representational tradition. If the terracotta plaque was intended as a votive offering to a local weather god, it depicts the ruler in an *imitatio dei* as supporting the god in his role as chaos fighter. The ruler thereby assumes the political part of the chaos fighter. The endowment of the plaque could have been a gift of gratitude from the ruler to the god for a victory won. The image of the ruler in this role may also have had an evocative function, which would suggest an apotropaic character of the plaque. The apotropaic function of a ceramic plaque, but not this motif, design, or style, might be a link to the significance of ancient Babylonian terracotta plaques.

A more precise dating of the object based on the iconographic tradition is not possible. Since contacts to Syria and to Egypt for the Late Bronze Age as well as for the earlier Iron Age are reflected in many features at Tall Ziraʿa, the ceramic plaque may well be older than the find context. The elite or local population had knowledge of traditions of far-flung areas, both north (Syria) and southwest (Egypt). The innovation that speaks from the combination of Syrian and Egyptian models, as well as from the choice of the image carrier and the detail design, is an indication of independence and self-awareness of the local population, although the execution of the plaque does not reveal perfect mastery of craftsmanship. Influencing models from monumental art may often have been disseminated via smaller image carriers. Conversely, developments in miniature art also occasionally influenced the craftsmen who created large-scale art.[30]

[30] Cf. on the connections between ivory art and reliefs from Tell Halaf the highly regarded contribution by Irene Winter (1989).

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Chapter 12:
How meaning evolves.
Proto-cuneiform signs: considerations on their origins at the intersection of visual and oral communication[1]

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Abstract. This paper starts from the pivotal hypothesis that writing is *by definition* a means of communication, combining features of visual and oral communication. Consequently, writing is basically bi-modal, placed at the intersection of the two fundamental sensory functions: sight and hearing. They are connected to two specific ways of representation, one being primarily spatially and the other temporally oriented. We suggest that these features are fundamental, independent from their typological classification such as semasiographic, syllabic or even alphabetical scripts. In a unique way – however with widely varying emphases – both domains become essential factors in the process of signification. Signification is consequently described as an (infinite) semiotic process, grounded in these perceptual modes. It is demonstrated here by a sample of selected examples that signification in both domains – and thus, of course, in scripts - is based on the same procedures: analogies and metaphors, specifically on synecdochic and metonymic reasoning.[1] It is claimed that an assessment of these procedures forms the core for any understanding of writing, first and foremost of semasiographic-syllabic types such as cuneiform script.

Keywords: Definition of writing, Signification processes, Semantic evolution, Historical semantics, Visual and oral sources of scripts, Bi-modal representations.

1. Introduction

Even today writing can be much more than a mode to preserve speech. It is not just a more or less developed means to preserve speech and to communicate language-based information: Capitalizing proper names or substantives as in German is a meta-linguistic feature, and also the phonetic inadequacy of modern scripts is well-known. Recently I argued that the earlier Mesopotamian scripts, most notably its earliest stages in "proto-cuneiform", must be studied from a non-logocentric perspective.[3] The language behind these documents –on which in the past decades so much ink has been spilled– is, as I would like to contend, not the only important issue when discussing proto-cuneiform. It is generally acknowledged –but not beyond dispute– that many of the earliest cuneiform signs are "abstract" and that, in comparison, the number of pictograms ("Bildzeichen") seems quite limited. As we attempt to demonstrate in the following, this notion –explicitly formulated by Falkenstein[4]– may not be entirely correct. As was recently shown by Cale Johnson,[5] the vessel signs $SILA_3$ and UKKIN can be used as indexical signs[6] for semantics only loosely connected with their primary iconic referent.[7] The progressing loss of iconicity supports all sorts of semantic extensions. Thus, from a semiotic point of view, imitation and immediate recognizability must not be seem as specific features of pro-cuneiform signs. Writing, in the sense advocated here, evolves at the intersection of visual and aural perception. The specific feature of writing is the combination of both modes. Thus, it becomes a *specific* mode of communication and it is therefore multi-modal in a strict sense.[8]

[1] I gratefully acknowledge the critical reading and the corrections of the English by Nadia Linder. My sincerest thanks go also to Martin Worthington who shared so kindly a draft of his explanatory sign list and for his valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper. Especially for my discussion of examples 2.4 and 2.5 (the standards) I rely heavily on the vast material collected by Renata M. van Dijk-Coombes' in her excellent 2015 Stellenbosch dissertation: The Form, Function and Symbolism of Standards in Ancient Mesopotamia during the Third and Fourth Millennia BCE: An Iconographical Study, now published in 2023.

[2] Needless to say, in this paper the term metaphor is not understood as an exclusively linguistic but rather as a conceptual phenomenon; an issue addressed from an Ancient Egyptian perspective already in Goldwasser 2005. Though certainly relevant, the topic of classification and metaphor, especially "the myth and belief principle" (Lakoff, see Goldwasser 2005: 107) are entirely ignored here.

[3] See Selz 2022. Among the many contributions to the interplay of pictures and words cf. Michalowski 1990; Morenz 2004; Cooper 2008; Woods 2010; Selz 2011, 2014, 2018a, 2022 and 2024; Cancik-Kirschbaum 2012; Gordin (ed.) 2014; Crawford 2014; and Nadali 2019.

[4] Falkenstein 1936: 25–26; cf. Selz 2018: 114–115 with fn. 5.

[5] Johnson 2016, 2019 and D'Anna, Jauß and Johnson 2016; see further Lecompte 2018.

[6] Indexical signs are understood as non-arbitrary signs with shifting reference and thus as being context-specific. In contrast, iconic signs possess a discrete reference –the depicted item–, whereas symbolic signs are more arbitrary, their meaning is usually defined by (cultural) conventions. Note that a pictogram may possess all the three described functions.

[7] A similar case was discussed by Rubio 2013.

[8] We ignore here the role of accounting –specifically numbers and number concepts– which certainly had a major impact on the evolution of writing; cf. Damerow / Englund / Nissen 1996, cf. Selz

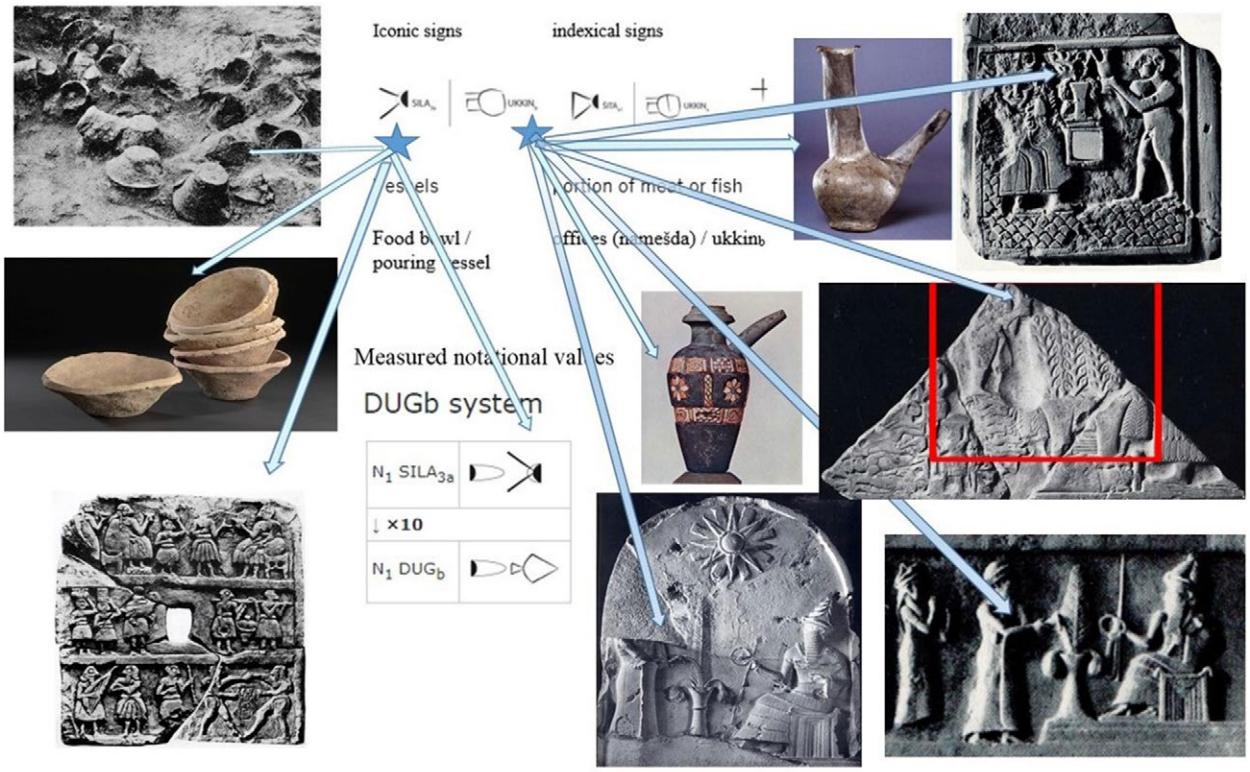


Figure 1. Outline of the intersection of iconic, indexical and symbolic use of signs; the author.

How this may relate to the process of signification, the attribution of meaning, in short the semiosis, is shown in Figure 1. The illustration exemplifies a possible reconstruction of such a semiotic evolution based on the Uruk period's earliest iconic representation of two extremely important vessels and parts of the connected semiosphere.[9] It demonstrates the semantics connected to these vessel types and indicates the different types of signification processes – in sum, how signs acquire a variety of (connected) meanings or representamen, repeatedly attracting new indexical functions. This process is not arbitrary, as can be deduced easily from the theoretical concept of "object etymologies"[10] or "material studies", particularly detailed in the "material engagement theory."[11] Stressing the cognitive side of signification –semiosis– may provide a grid for an improved understanding of such processes. The meaning an object might acquire is grounded on the distinction between an object's intentionality and its affordances.[12] Even though cylinder seals possess an affordance to be used as a weapon to kill an Old Akkadian king (Rimush),[13] it was hardly their intended or common use. In the following I'll try to explore some examples of early cuneiform signs from a semiotic background and study them as semiotic objects, trying to shed some light on their discursive universe. It is important to note here that –as in a popular understanding of Peirce theories– semiosis is an infinite process of signification insofar as every interpretamen may function as a (second order) sign acquiring specific (new) meanings, or, in other words the signified may in a subsequent step acquire the role of a (second order) signifier.[14] In short, to uncover such chains of sign functions becomes a basic task for understanding the evolution of scripts. Consequently, in our opinion it is less important whether a sign

2022. In this respect the link to recent cognitive research is especially compelling; cf. Overmann 2018a; Malafouris 2010, 2013 and 2019, and Coolidge and Overmann 2012; Chrisomalis 2010 and 2013, and others. Early counting devices as well as their scriptorial representations seem to me not only "object oriented" signs – in fact, many of the earlier tokens show few or no iconic features. It is their arrangement (in this respect I agree with Krebernik 2020: 9–10), i.e. their spatial distribution, which is salient here. It is the sense of "touching" which is involved, and consequently the movability of objects and their spatial fixation –arrangements– play a salient role.

[9] A detailed analysis of this process can now be found in Selz 2024.

[10] Cf. the collected articles in Hilgert *et al.* (eds) and there Selz 2018b.

[11] Compare Malafouris 2013 and 2019; Overmann 2018b and 2019.

[12] This is well described by Nadali 2019: 54, referring to Malafouris: "between intentionality and affordance", as stated by Malafouris (2013: 18): affordance of objects describes the relationships between the material world and humans through a process of engagement and embodiments; objects are not inert and they do not simply undergo our action, but they are active and animate, thus causing a process of engagement and interaction where it is not simply automatic that we act upon them, but they conversely act upon us."

[13] See Koch-Westenholz 2000: 394.

[14] This is of course a simplification; the complex and sometimes adapted Peircean theory of signs is conveniently and concisely discussed in Atkin 2013.

iconically represents a physical object or not. In this respect our approach should not be confused with "omnisignificance" used as a term for some traditional hermeneutic approaches to Holy Scriptures, such as the Bible.[15] However, it can hardly be denied that the term rather well describes a general Mesopotamian attitude displayed especially in first millennium scholarly literature, most remarkably in several mystical and esoteric texts.[16] It is not an easy task to identify therein the different levels of speculations, but we should recall that even the 'strangest' examples of them may have been operative in the ancients' thought.

2. Signification processes at the intersection of the visual and aural domains of writing: case studies.

2.1 The case of TUN$_3$ or DUN$_3$ and other body part icons

Following Steinkeller 1995: 710, = ZATU 489 is the proto-form of DUN$_3$ or TUN$_3$; judging from the later attested meaning of dun$_3$ "lip" (and "chin", Akk. *šaptu* and *suqtu)*. The sign is most probably a depiction of a "lower lip", a Habsburgian Lip so to speak.[17] It is easily conceivable that the icon refers to the lips in general, but its original (and more specific) meaning is preserved in the term for the "hanging-lip vessel" tun$_3$-la$_2$, as the famous pouring vessel of Gudea (Figure 2) is named.[18]

dun$_3$ is also part of a fish name (ku$_6$.)suḫur-tun$_3$-(-bar), most certainly a kind of carp marked by its protruding lips (Selz 1997: 36). Dun$_3$ is also part of designation for a (female) garment (gada/tug$_2$.)niĝ$_2$-dun$_3$-du$_3$; the literary interpretation as "(textile) thing placed/used (at/for) the lips" does, however, not help to clarify its function.[19] The other word for "lips" is /nundun /, / numdum/ or /numdun/, phonetically rendered as /namdu/ and in Emesal as /šumdum/ (see Attinger 2021: 824-825 with fn. 2491). /numdun/, /nundum/ or /namdu/ is written as KAxNUN, nun being almost certainly a phonetic indicator. Given the pictorial origin of dun$_3$ as the

Figure 2. Pouring Vessel of Gudea, after Moortgat 1967: taf. 187.

"lower lip" it seems tempting to contrast the word with Old Babylonian /nundun/ or /numdum/.[20] However, a sign etymology with interpretation [HIGH]+[LIP] can only be secondary. Therefore, the word –not yet attested prior to the Old Babylonian period– cannot be a simple compound with /nun/ "high" and /dun/ "lip", as NUN cannot refer to /nun/ = "high, upper" for the following reasons: 1. The compound type [APPOSITION (adjective]+[HEAD] is elsewhere unattested; 2. The late lexical evidence for "upper lip" nundum-an-na (MSLSS I, 17–27 iii 51) and nundun-an-ta-ĝu$_{10}$ (OB Nippur Ugumu 99[21]) does likewise not support such a notion; in consequence an etymology of the word (originally */

[15] Whether and in what respect such an approach befits Mesopotamian hermeneutical approaches (as discussed in Frahm 2019) is a question of restricted value for our discussion here, but it might be well-suited for modern approaches discussing the "meaning" of cuneiform signs.

[16] See the texts assembled in Livingstone 1986; cf. Frahm 2011: 339–344 and 2019.

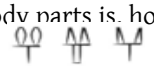
[17] cf. also nundun za$_3$ (loc.) bar-bar "qui a la lippe pendante" (Edubba'a B 151 *apud* Attinger 2021: 199).

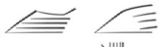
[18] The depiction of the vase shows to the right and the left of the URI3 door-posts a divine winged leopard(?); the posts themselves are framed by intertwined snakes, placed exactly underneath to spout of the vessel; see. Heuzey 1902: 281.

[19] Note that DCCLT suggests for tug$_2$.tun$_3$ in RA 017, 181 (Sm 1670) "part of clothing or cloth trimming? thing or cloth trimming?", the context of which suggests for our textile a meaning like "garment with tassels or hems." See further the lexical list with ^{tug2}tun$_3$ ⌜gi$_4$⌝ (HS 1696 o 2; OB Nippur Ura 4 554), ^{tug2}tun$_3$ im-ma = *bi-šu$_2$* (Rm 0606+ r ii 20); ^{tug2}tun$_3$ keš$_2$-da = *šik-ka-tum* (Rm 0606+ r ii 22); ^{tug2}tun$_3$-⌜sur⌝-ra (OB Nippur Ura 4 556) (data from ePSD2). See further [uzu] tun$_3$-la$_2$ = MIN<(*ku-ar-sin-nu*)> (Ura 15 Seg. 7:5 etc.), after DCCLT "fringe hanging down = ankle, fetlock".

[20] Sign forms in Mittermayer 2005: 125; on the phonetic variants see Attinger 2021: 824–825 with fn. 2491.

[21] [nundun an-ta]-ĝu$_{10}$ = *ša-ap-ti* ⌜*e*⌝¬-[*li-tum*] (UET 7, 095 o 4').

namdun/m/?; cf. Attinger 2021: fn. 2491) cannot be established. Synecdochic use of body parts is, however, not unknown: signs like GEŠTU$_a$  (ZATU 202; cf. also AMAR ZATU 29)[22] show a formalized (animal's) head with a distinctive pair of ears. By semantic extension the word /geštug/ attracts several new meanings: "ear > understanding > reason > wisdom > plan", in synecdochic use it also designates a fish ĝešĝeštug$_{(2)}^{ku6}$ and is the designation of a part of a plow, ĝešĝeštug. M. Worthington drew my attention to a highly interesting suggestion by Sayce 1877: 149 accepted by Unger 1921: 8 that the ME sign ME$_a$ ME$_b$ (ZATU 358) could represent a "tongue," Sumerian /eme/, ironically perhaps a mouth with outstretched tongue which *via* rebus then acquired the Lautwert /me/. Whether IGI is really an iconic "eye" is, however, far more dubious (ZATU 40; cf. Steinkeller 1995: 698) Undisputed is the interpretation of derivative signs like SAGxGEŠTU$_a$ or SAGŠU "head cover", or ŠUR$_{2a}$ "angry" and, of course, KA$_a$, and other related compound signs. All these modify SAG "head".

Similarly, ŠU "hand" appears in a turned version as  TAK$_4$. How this iconically relates to DA$_a$ and A$_2$ needs no further discussion here.

The signs TUM$_a$ and with additional strokes TUM$_b$ is clearly depicting a waist in a human's body. In this case, the common sign name may be especially misleading and should be better given as IB$_2$, ib$_2$ being the Sumerian word for "hips" (Akk. *qablu*) The reading /tum/ seems to be restricted to tum = *hurdatu* "cross beam" derived via a metonymic specification.

Finally the sign DU ZATU 82 is obviously derived from the basic image of a foot; however the word for "foot" in Sumerian /ŋiri/ is normally written ĝiri$_3$ or ĝiri$_2$, the icons showing an ANIMAL HEAD or a DAGGER respectively. In the former case this writing may (or may not) be connected to (transport) animals, as the noun ĝiri$_3$ metonymically also designates a "path". The rather rare writing ĝiri$_2$ however is clearly a rebus, based on the homoiophony of the Sumerian word for DAGGER and FOOT.

[22] Note that Steinkeller 1995: 203 has drawn attention to the fact that ZATU 203 incorrectly mingles the EAR–sign with the representation of a divine symbol GEŠTU$_b$ = (Szarzyńska 1993: 16–17 fn. 9).

By simple modifying strokes the FOOT sign can acquire special meanings:

DU-*gunû* is most likely a forerunner of later KAŠ$_4$, that is DU-šeššeg "to run" (cf. also DUxDIŠ); but a relation to later DU-*gunû* (LAK 486) SUHUŠ "sole" may be also be possible.

To conclude here, the best and undisputed example for the metonymic –synecdochic use of signs is provided by the animal head signs– the paleography of which and the problems involved are well reviewed in Mittermayer 2005.

2.2 The case of EZEM/EZEN

The archaic Uruk forms of EZEM are and = ZATU 150[23] and almost certainly depict a place with four or two accesses (gateways). It is therefore almost certain that the representamen is a place where people came and went, perhaps a "meeting place". Especially in the Uruk period this sign is used as a frame or matrix sign indicating several toponyms: The iconic notion "meeting place" has disappeared later, the sign was (by metonymy) semantically restricted to refer to the most important activity connected with such meetings, which is feasting.[24] The later form BAD$_3$ = EZEMxBAD "wall(ed place)" [25] is (*pace* ZATU 44) not attested before the late Early Dynastic period, as Steinkeller 1995: 698 44 has shown.[26] The widespread use of BAD$_3$[27] in the later 3rd mill. was probably based on the earlier writing of the city of Durum, which either is a homophone to Semitic(!) *dūrum,* or perhaps the city bore a Semitic name right from the earliest periods on.[28] That in the course of history the notion of EZEM as (a walled?) meeting place was given up and (partially) replaced by bad$_3$ = *dūrum* may very well reflect an

[23] The Ebla Sign List 29 has i$_3$-zi-num$_2$ = *ezem*.

[24] I suggest that the matrix sign EZEM when referring to toponyms is basically conceptual, whereas the earliest form of URU "city" stress morphological features, that is multistoried buildings or buildings towering above a wall. (ATU 5, pl.071, W 9579, cd); for a conceptual evaluation of the semantics connected with URU see Charvát 2012. The use of EZEM$_{a/b}$ in Uruk period "account colophones" is discussed by Kelley 2018: 373, 384–385 ("it may be that EZEN (later, 'festival') were events that involved the exchange or expenditure of livestock, as well as perhaps the exchange of slaves and/or other personnel.")

[25] From OIP 15 15 rev. i:12.

[26] Whether /bad/ is a *Lautwert* of EZEM, as Steinkeller supposes, is a different question.

[27] Steinkeller 1995: 698 has argued that EZEMxAŠ/RUM (in Uruk period texts) is actually a phonetic indicator, reflecting the pronunciation of the city Durum.

[28] The use of a more general term, that is "fortified place, walled place" ties in nicely with the occurrence of similar terms in Sumerian toponyms like Unug or Niĝin; cf. Selz 2013: 320.

Figure 3. Cluster of pistaciae; from Wikipedia, NAEINSUN own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27280686.

important change in the conceptualization/function of settlements.

2.3 The case of LAM

The earliest sign form depicts a heap of small items = ZATU 328 –whether pebbles or fruits cannot yet be decided; but cf. = ZATU 329,[29] which supports the latter. This suggestion is further corroborated by ZATU 328 attestations in the archaic vessel and wood lists; see Steinkeller 1995: 704. The sign form ZATU 328 may connect to (ĝeš)lam or ĝešlam (Attinger 2021: 676), or as ePSD2 gives for ĝeš. LAMxKUR (ĝeš)eš$_{22}$(/iš$_{11}$); on this cf. Steinkeller 1995: 704). The Akkadian equivalents are *lammu*; *lupānu*; *šiqdu*; and *šiqittu.* The tree is either a "terebinth" or an "almond tree" (distributed to different readings?); the present writer suggests that one may originally refer to various species of the *genus pistacia.* In any case the tree is metonymically named and iconically described by a morphological distinct feature: its cluster of fruits (Figure 3).

In the form /lamgal /, written ĝeš lam-gal or ĝeš lam-ḫal it then means "nuts", probably "big nuts" as opposed to ĝeš lam-tur the "small nuts of a terebinth". Further, gi-lam is, according to Vukosavović 2011: 139–14,1 a "cluster of dates." However, I suggest that originally it must have had a more general meaning "cluster (of fruits)" as the additional specification zu$_2$-lum "dates" in the Old Sumerian economic texts indicates. That term is then –by synecdoche – designating specifically the "date cluster", following the well-known Mesopotamian

[29] Green and Nissen 187: 329 describe the sign form misleadingly as LAM+KUR; see Steinkeller 1995: 704.

Figure 4. Modern fermentation vat; source: Untitled, Steve Bennett, Flickr

way to produce new meanings and lexemes; cf. below 2.6. zabar. Whether gi-lam is then indeed distinct from ĝir$_3$-lam "a basket (for fruits)" is another question not to be addressed here. $^{ĝ^{a}}$lam-saĝ, the name of "a type of lumber", may then designate "high-quality or big sized pieces of lumber."

Turning now to the well-attested noun (dug.)lam-ri, or /lamdre/ a "brewing vat" probably used for fermentation,[30] that is a "fermentation vat." For a better understanding of the word's semantics it may be helpful to look at the following picture of a modern type of such a vat; see Figure 4.

Therefore, is it suggested here that the /lam/ part of this compound noun refers to "bubbles" or "foam" seen as "heaps of small things." More complicated is the supposedly verbal part /ri/ or /dre/ (or ři/e), as the distribution of various meanings to (originally separate) phonetic forms remains still problematic. An interpretation of (dug.)lamdre as "(vessel in which) fermentation bubbles are produced" > "bubbling vessel" seems perfectly feasible though; see Figure 4.

Attinger 2021: 676 suggests for the *noun* /lam/ a meaning "*prospérité*"; a meaning which can be derived either from the semantics of "heap(ed) items" as a sign of wealth or/ and from the verbal use lam (see below) as in (lam-)lam-ma "épanoui; exubérant" (Attinger 2021: 677).

In any case, that the noun lam *via* the metonymic use of "heap of small thing" acquired also the meaning "richness; exuberance, wealth" seems sufficiently clear, and accordingly the derived meanings *kabtu* "heavy; abundant, etc." (aratta^{ki} = ⌜*kab-tum*⌝), *tanattum* and *tanittum* "(hymns of) praise" are semantic extensions, as is evidenced by ⌜aratta⌝^{ki} = *ta-nit-tum ša$_2$ ša$_2$-ri-*⌜*i*⌝, (CT 19, pl. 25, K 04309+ o ii' 8'), the "hymnical praise of wealth."

It is suggested here that this notion is the etymographic explanation for the writing of the toponym Aratta LAM.KUR.RU(.KI) OR LAMxKUR.RU(.KI) with the reading Aratta.[31] The earliest form (cf. ZATU 35),[32] remains disputed.[33] I therefore suggest that the sign is to be analyzed etymographically as [ABUNDANCE]+[MOUNTAIN]+[CAST],[34] that is "mountain region reckoned for its wealth." This suggestion can be corroborated by the notion that –especially in the narrative cycle of "The Matter of Aratta"– this semi-mythic region is marked by its prosperity and rich resources.[35]

[30] Note $^{(dug)}$/lamdre/ as used by ePSD2 better accounts for the different attested script forms then Attinger's lam-di-r (Attinger 2021: 676). The phonetics of the /dre/ or /ře/ part, however, remains problematic as it is often mixed with the verb(s) /dri/ and /ri/ or / dru/ and /ru/ or /du/; cf. Selz 1995b.

[31] We note that there is no evidence for LAMxKUR or LAM:KUR = *aratta; likewise, the ED IIIb reference CUSAS 35, 3 and the Old Akkadian OIP 104, 157 clearly write LAM:KUR.RU(.KI).Note further Mittermayer 2009: 26–27.

[32] Photo from CDLI P003766; Steinkeller 1995: 698 remained sceptical whether this composite sign refers to Aratta and correctly pointed out the incorrectness of its analysis in ZATU 35.

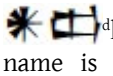
[33] Compare the arguments of Mittermayer 2009: 26–27 who sees no attestation of LAM.KUR.RU = Aratta prior to the Fara period (courtesy M. Worthington).

[34] Note that it cannot be entirely excluded that RU (also) functioned as phonetic indicator, based on homoiophony; cf. in (Šulgi R): sagida A, 20); on the very useful term homoiophony see Krebernik 2013: 188.

[35] Cf. Mittermayer 2009: 33–35 (with the ref. to Šulgi Y 2: ku$_3$-gen$_7$

To similar semantics belongs the etymographic diri-writing KI.LAM with the reading /šakanka/ "market" or /ganba/ "price". For both words the etymographic analysis [PLACE]+[WEALTH] or perhaps better [PLACE]+[BUSTLING] is perfectly conceivable.

We suggest, therefore, that the basic meaning of the (de-verbal) noun /lam/ is something like "exuberance, bustle and wealth" which parallels Attinger's translation "prospérité", in verbal use "faire prospérer, faire exubérer" (Attinger 2021: 676). /lam/ does not seem to be a primary noun; it is almost certainly derived from a verb /lam/ Akk. *ešēbu ; uššubu.* The verbal /lam/ and the homoiophonic verb lum (Akk. *enēbu ; unnubu* ; *namāru* ; *šebû* ; *šihu)* are semantically very close[36] and do most probably not necessitate a separate lexical entry. The archaic form of lum probably depicts streams of water, perhaps "rain(?)"; the different icons of LAM and LUM may therefore accentuate the basic meaning, the representamen, which is "to exuberate, to pile up; to flourish."[37] The conclusion is that if used as a (de-verbal) noun /lam/ refers to clusters of small items, fruits as well as, perhaps, stones: The verb lam was compared with the verb lum already by Deimel 1928–1933. Attinger gives for both forms nearly the same semantics, and ePSD2 mixes both with the Akkadian equations *ešēbu* and *uššubu*. Perhaps the original semantics of the verb lam is "to bustle; to heap up; to bubble" and, by semantic extension also "to chop" and "to shred". The direct iconic referents of LAM "a heap of pieces" and LUM "abundant water" is, nevertheless, different.

In our context one cannot avoid to refer to the non-standard script form ^{d}lam(a) for common  ^{d}lama$_3$. The full and correct form of this deity's name is probably /lammar/, which becomes only apparent when the name is followed by a vowel. As the "correct" etymology of the name remains unknown, the form ^{d}lam(a) seems not only be based on phonetics but might conceal the sort of scholarly "babilistic" speculations so salient in later Mesopotamian hermeneutics: the deity, imagined as a guardian angel, is indeed something like an "externalized soul",[38] may be connected to a kind of Εὐδαίμων, the personalized vital force of an individual or a building. A similar kind of secondary "babilistic" speculation may be considered for /alam / or /alan/ "statue", but also "figure".[39] In favor of this one might not only refer to the (late) syllabic a-lam in STT 2, 197 rev. 15[40] –sufficiently explained as phonetic rendering– but perhaps to the more relevant and well-attested writing of the Sumerian word uktin, perhaps better uĝdim or uĝdin,[41] "physiognomy". The writing form is SIG$_7$.ALAM,[42] with sig$_7$ or si$_{12}$(-g) "to be / become green; to blossom" (Attinger 2021:915);[43] when used as adjectival noun it means "green(ish); yellow(ish)" (Attinger 2021: 917). In other words, /lam/ and /sig$_7$/ show a close semantic relation.

2.4 The case of the "standard" MUŠ$_3$

In iconography, the "standards" MUŠ$_3$ and URI$_3$ /ŠEŠ appear most often in pairs. They belong to architectural structures and are thus marking entrances and separating two specific spheres. This is, of course, a truism, even when a pragmatic realization of this function, as proposed here, may encounter skepticism. Textual evidence for the function is abundant.[44] The somewhat provocative hypothesis that these "standards" originate as the supporting elements of a "roller door" or "shutter" (and further implicitly allude to Venus' partial (in)visibility, elaborated in Selz 2020) can be corroborated by the following: The signs MUŠ$_3$ and MUŠ$_3$-*gunû* have the readings suku$_5$ and suku$_6$ respectively, which entered into Akkadian as *šukû* "pole (of a door)." The very same signs with reading muš$_3$ and muš$_2$ have also the Akkadian equation *zīmu* "face".[45] These meanings, "posts" and "fac(ad)e", can be easily derived from the proposed "shutter". Further a connection to the problematic Sumerian compound verb muš$_2$--tum$_2$ = *naparkû* "to stop, to (put an) end" (< *to shut) may also be possible.

gi$_{16}$-sa mi-ni-ĝar-ĝar "Schätze wie aus dem glänzenden Arata habe ich vor ihr (Ninlil) hingestellt."); cf. further Mittermayer 2009: 38 and 80.

[36] Suggested already by Deimel 1928–1933: 435, and p. 565.

[37] Whether the rare form ga-lam for common /galam/ (in Šulgi C b 13) indicates an etymological relation, remains uncertain; cf. however common /galam/ "(to) chase; (to produce) artfully" and the fact that in the Ebla sign list /lam/ follows kur$_2$, which prompted ePSD2 to attribute to /lam/ the meaning "cutting" (= *hisbu*?) – which in turn is reminding of the verb /halam/ to "smash to pieces; destroy."

[38] See Steinert 2012: 303–304 and 406–407 (with ref. to earlier discussions by Oppenheim, Selz and others).

[39] Note that AHw 534 sub *lānu* "Gestalt" (already Ebla sign list 52 has *la-ʾa$_3$-num$_2$* =alan) considers a derivation of the Akkadian word from either alan or ar. *lawn* "Farbe". Note further alam as an element in personal names from Archaic Ur; see Krebernik 2019: 49.

[40] a-lam diĝir-ᶠreᶠ-ne igi-zu-še$_3$ mu-ᶠunᶠ-gu-bi-iš // *ana ṣa-lam* DINGIR.DINGIR^{ni} ᶠxᶠ ša$_2$ *ina maḫ-ᶠriᶠ-ka* GUBᶠ^{zu}ᶠ (Sum) "The statues of the gods are standing before you", (Akk) "For the statues of the gods ... which stand before you."

[41] See Selz 2020b: 342–344.

[42] On which see Pfitzner 2014: 68.

[43] On this writing see also Pfitzner 2014: 67.

[44] The well-known icon for ig = *daltu*, a Western Saloon-like icon of a "door leaf" often has this connotation in the ED textual record; cf. e.ge names like en/lugal-ig-gal "The Lord/Ruler (is/has) a huge door" or en-ig-gal-lum-ma "The Lord (is/has) a huge door (of) abundance" (DP 574 1:4; RTC 66:1 71, 7:7); cf. below Figure 5.

[45] The very same signs also have the reading suḫ or suḫ$_{10}$, designating a "crown" or an "ornament". Muš igi-ĝu$_{10}$ *ṣu$_2$-bu-ur$_2$ i-ni-ia;* this Akkadian entry (Ob Ugumu iii 2) is related to *ṣubur pānī* (see CAD Ṣ 228 and AHw 1538 s.v. *zupru*, DCCLT). The word is derived from *ṣabāru* ("to twinkle"); other possibilities are *ṣapāru* and *ṣepēru*. The common Sumerian equivalent for *ṣubur pānī* is SIG$_7$.ALAN (cf. above), which is a word for "appearance" or "facial expression". It is proposed here that /muš/ is "face; facade," in our context referring to the closed "shutters" of the door.

Figure 5. Unprovenanced seal (Akkadian period) with astro-mythological scene (?); Aruz 2003: 217.

2.5 The case of the "standards" URI$_3$ and ŠEŠ: the - "Bügelschaft"

In art historical descriptions this "standard" is often referred to as the "Bügelschaft", a very rare German word used occasionally to describe similar looking parts of instruments. From (probably) the ED IIIb phase in Girsu stems the only extant physical exemplar of such an item with has a reconstructed length of 3,27 m.[46] The identification of the "Bügelschaft" with the archaic sign form of URI$_3$ and ŠEŠ is undisputed. However, the similar looking signs ZATU 595 and ZATU 523 are incorrectly identified in ZATU, as Steinkeller 1995: 710 has shown: ZATU 595, later LAK 32, is ŠEŠ, whereas ZATU 523 is URI$_3$, later LAK 31. We may further note that ZATU 596 = URI$_5$ is ŠEŠ+AB, thus not immediately establishing a phonetic link to the city Ur(im); *contra* ZATU 595. When we check the iconographic evidence, it is far from certain that these two icons of the "Bügelschaft" are to be separated, as they certainly are in early texts. Moreover, I cannot find a clue whence the reading /šeš/ might have originated.[47] The *Bügelschaft*, as does the MUŠ$_3$ standard, also appears in pairs and often marks the entrance of buildings. Aruz 2003: 217 identified them as "gatepost standards", even when the iconographic context in his case (Figure 5) may point to "astral or planetary" connotations.

A short look at the following two artefacts (Figures 6 and 7) confirms the identification of the *Bügelschafts* as (twins of) gateposts beyond reasonable doubt.

Unlike the "ring-post with streamers", e.g. the MUŠ$_3$ sign, the *Bügelschaft* was *also a movable item*, which is indicated by its occasional ending in an arrow-like spike,[48] although it most likely could also have been a fixed installation.[49] It seems very likely that it was this

[46] De Sarzec and Heuzey 1884–1913: 410, plan C.1; Parrot 1948: 63, 68, 106, figs. 15.17, 23 and 26c; Marchesi and Marchetti 2011: 44, pl. 11.11. Note that already Meißner 1920: 302–330, with reference to cylinder sealings, remarked: "Der Eingang zur Kapelle wird . . . von 2 hohen Bügelschäften flankiert."

[47] Keetman's suggestion (2020: 356) that the reading (and meaning "brother") relates to the icon (mostly) appearing in pairs seems possible, but does not fully convince me; cf. however the double *Bügelschaft* in Amiet 1980: pl. 13.229.

[48] The spike ending is commonly found; e.g Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: https://collections.privatemfa.org/objects/163847. On the *Bügelschaft* in association with architecture see now van Dijk-Coombes 2018: 131–134.

[49] The Tello standard with its 3,27 m was most likely a fixed installation!

Figure 6. Gateposts at the entrance of a stable-like structure, framed by a dairy scene; inlaid freeze from Ubaid (Ninhursaĝa-temple) (Hall and Woolley 1927: xi, 91-94, pl. XXXI).

Figure 7. The sun-god appearing situated between a *Bügelschaft* and a door-leaf; from Jerusalem. Schroer and Keel 2005: 349 no. 251.

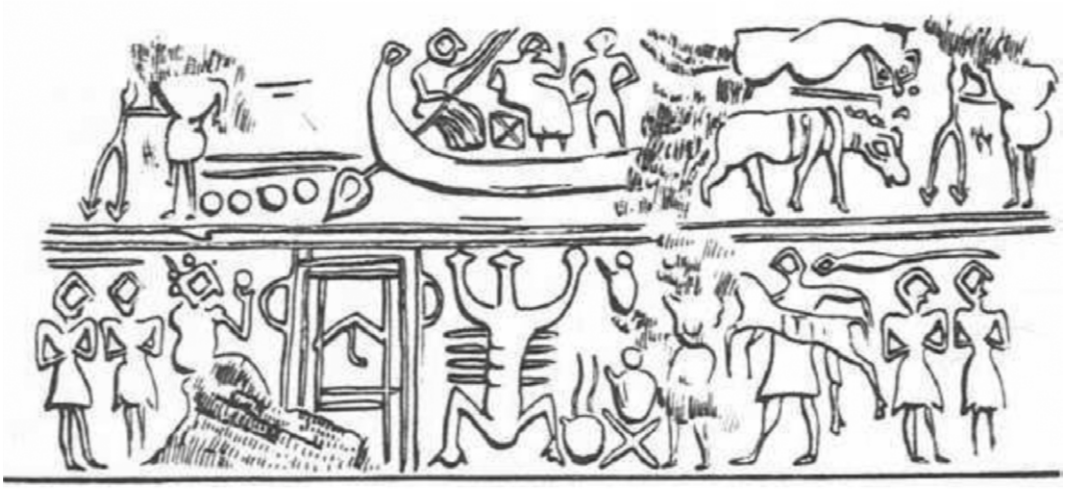


Figure 8. Early Dynastic cylinder seal Amiet 1980: pl 103. 1361; for the structure between these "gateposts" cp, also the seal Amiet 1980: pl. 88 no.1158.

supposed "movability" of the URI_3 and ŠEŠ[50] which spurred its use as a mere indexical sign, the meaning of which was outlined by its visual associations. In comparison with the "roller-door or venetian blinds hypothesis" for the $MUŠ_3$ sign a similar interpretation for the pairs of the *Bügelschaft* suggests itself: Both "standards" (originally) seem to hold a mat or a curtain marking the separation of two spheres. that is a sacred from a more mundane (cultic) sphere. That the "entrance structure" which so often is framed by the *Bügelschafts* actually depicts such a shutter construction[51] is at least likely, but perhaps not (yet) beyound doubt (Figures 6 and 8).

[50] Compare Charvát 2016: 28, 78.

[51] Whether the elements framed by two *Bügelschaft* in Collon 2005: 18 cat. no. 28 represent curtains or real door leaf is uncertain.

Figure 9. Deity appearing at the entrance building with a "Bügelschaft" on either side; unprovenanced seal: Amiet 1980: pl. 103 no.1361.

In this line of reasoning it seems extremely likely that the deities (or the heroes) depicted between the posts should be understood as (metaphorical) epiphanies connected to the ritual function of the room within which they are placed;[52] cf. Figure 9.

Both the $MUŠ_3$ sign and the URI_3/ŠEŠ sign have, of course, acquired additional indexical functions; they may refer to the goddess Inana on the one side or allude to bathing rituals and associated purifications, as well as other mytho-ritual performances often connected to the god Enki/Ea.[53] But not only the separation of the aforementioned spheres may be marked by these standards.[54] The suggested –and I think iconographical identifiable– function of the standards for the e_2-engur-ra bathrooms explicitly may mark the "privacy" or exclusivity of these rituals, performed not visible to the wider audience of people (worshippers): Bathing (presumably) was *the* private affair *per se*.[55]

Bathing rituals are from the late ED periods onwards attested for many deities.[56] As Sallaberger (1993: 191–192; cf. also p. 207) has argued, the bathing ritual of the moon god was certainly a major cultic event in the Ur III period.[57]

Judging from the pictorial evidence which depicts the URI_3/ŠEŠ posts as (occasionally) movable items it seems certain that they were not, as the $MUŠ_3$ post, always fixed architectural elements for a roller door or venetian blinds; most likely they also could serve to hold a curtain or a mat as part of a kind of folding screen. Reed mats and curtains supposedly played –besides the doorposts– a major role within this reconstructed ritual.

Both the $MUŠ_3$ sign and the URI_3/ŠEŠ sign, despite their functional origins, are attested in a wide range of pictorial associations. The *Bügelschaft* is often shown in the context of astral symbols, especially with the crescent,[58] which in one case tops the gateposts (Amiet 1980: pl. 98, no. 1282); in another case it is topped by a bird, probably the Anzu(d) –often shown with outstretched wings above the structure framed by the posts– and thus indicating the apotropaic functions required at entrances.[59,60] Quite often we also find a pictorial connection with a naked hero (sometimes identifiable as the six-curled Lahmu "The Hairy One"), who is usually associated with Enki/Asarluḫi and the abzu/engur.[61] The deity shown most often between the pair of *Bügelschafts* is a deity associated with streams of

[52] After finishing this article I learnt that the very same suggestion was proposed earlier and from a wider perspective by Battini 2017 and again in Battini 2022.

[53] Without further explication the reader is referred here to Johandi's study from 2019.

[54] Note, that the double-faced Isimud (on the meaning of his name "who brings the shoots forth" and his connection to Enki/E'a see now Keetman 2022) iconically represents the deity being directed to both the inside and the outside of the water chapel thus indexing the notion of water-dependent fertility.

[55] Cf. also the seal Legrain 1936: pl. 20 no. 385 with a female nude between the posts, shown underneath a scene of copulating humans.

[56] See Sallaberger 1993: 65–68; Selz 1995a: 168–171 with fns. 730, 740.

[57] Cf. also the seal from grave PG 699 in the Ur Royal Cemetery (Frankfort 1939: pl. XVIIIk) and the discussion in van Dijk-Coombes 2023: 105–106.

[58] Simple crescent standards are well attested since the Uruk periods.

[59] The iconographic co-occurrences of the URI_3 sign are also discussed in Charvat 2005: 160–162, 193.

[60] There may be an "intertextual" relationship between our seal (Ill. 10) and the text Enki's Journey to Nippur ll 5–10: ^{d}en-ki en nam tar-tar-re-dè / é-a-ni kug za-gìn téš-bi ba-ni-in-řú / kug za-gìn-bi u_4 KÁRA.KÁRA-ka / èš-e abzu-a ul im-ma-ni-in-DU / $suku_{5/6}$-kug galam du_{11}-ga abzu-ta è-a / en ^{d}nu-dím-mud-ra mu(-un)-na-su_8-su_8-ge-eš "Enki, the lord who decides the fates, there built his house - in its unity (of) silver and lapis lazuli! Its silver and lapis lazuli -- (it is) the ... light! He has decorated (it) with blossoms. The shrine in the Abzu: the shining door posts, skillfully wrought, came out of the Abzu - they stood (there) for the lord Nudimmud!" (ref. and trsl. courtesy N. Linder).

[61] Cf. Frankfort 1939: pl. XXIc; Boehmer 1965: 42, 92, 93, 132, 133, 177, taf. XLIV no. 518, no.1210, taf. XLIV.520, taf. XLII.499.

Figure 10. Enki/Ea in his bathroom and double-faced Isimud at the entrance; Porada 1948: 26, pl. XXXI no. 202; Boehmer 1965: 42, 92, 93, 132, 133, 177, taf. XLIV nos. 518 and 1210.

Figure 11. A variant depiction of a ritual bath/basin; Old Akkadian. Collon 2005: 164; see also Boehmer 1965: 82, 89, 176, taf. XLII no. 501.

water[62] leaving an aryballos,[63] or simply sitting in the "water chapel".[64] The Water Chapel is almost certainly the pictorial representation of a bathroom e_2-engura[65] or a water basin, the latter identifiable in archeological context as the Abzu marked out by bituminized bricks, or simply being a basin like "bathtub" as the famous Gudea basin.[66] The deity sitting in this water chapel "bathroom" (see Figures 10 and 11) is therefore with some certainty identifiable as Enki /Ea or the god Asarluḫi.[67] Other deities depicted with the *Bügelschaft*

[62] For example, De Sarzec and Heuzey 1884–1913: pl. 30bis.15; Porada 1948: 26; pl. XXXI.203; Boehmer 1965: taf. XLIV.523 and taf. XLIII.502; Moortgat 1966: taf. 30.223.

[63] That is a small spherical or globular flask with a narrow neck.

[64] Boehmer 1965:42, 92, 93, 132, 133, 177; taf. XLIV.518; no. 1210; water chapel: Amiet 1976: 46; fig. 29 = Boehmer 1965:42, 43, 63, 75, 79, 83, 86, 91–93, =108, 175; taf. XLI.488; no. 1139 = Collon 2005: 35; 34 cat. no. 105 = Frankfort 1939:102–103; pl. XVIIIk.

[65] Such an e_2-engur(-ra), a "bathroom"; is described in DP 613 (date Ukg. L 4) and its draft STH 1, 40; cp, Selz 1993: 390–398. What is outlined in this building plan is most certainly the ruler's (private) house (e_2-ensi$_2$-ka) (not the e_2-gal to be sure), the last plan was checked by Uru-KA-gina "in person".

[66] It is therefore proposed that e_2-engura refers to a room ("chapel") and abzu to a bathing basin; note that many temples possessed an abzu (cf. Selz 1995a: 121–124) which for mythological reason remained intertwined with Enki/Ea or Asarluḫi (or functionally related deities of "purification").

[67] It is quite noteworthy that the major features observable in our sealing possess a striking parallel to the major features of the god Asarluḫi, as has been evaluated by Johandi 2019.

are the moon god (crescent), the sun god,[68] or the Janus-faced Isimud. Other understandable pictorial associations are the Mušḫuššu (as in the pouring vessel of Gudea), various fish and snakes, and occasionally the snake-god Niraḫ himself.[69] In sum, the visual program shown with the *Bügelschaft* succinctly summarizes what we presently know about Enki/Ea or Asarluḫi's connection to purification, bathing and incantations and fertility –in short, Enki's specific domains.

Turning now to the reed mats. Reed mats certainly were an important object, whether spread on floors[70] or hanging. Here the ED written form of the goddess Ninlil, ^{d}nin-KID comes to mind, which eventually may be interpreted as a partial Diri writing: [LADY]+[REED MAT]. It may well be that the Archaic sign form EN.KID$_a$ for Enlil is a perfect parallel.[71] Observations of Englund 1998: 74–76 (with fn. 151) and the extensive discussion by Wang 2011: 56–59 (see also Keetman 2020: 361) have shown that the theonym as well as the toponym must –in the archaic texts– be kept apart from EN.E$_2$ [72] which, however, appear as elements of personal names[73] such as en-e$_2$-til$_3$.[74] Therefore, the archaic sign forms for Enlil, in contrast to most ED forms, cannot be understood as **$^{(d)}$EN.E$_2$. It seems that the writing EN.E$_2$ of the theonym and toponym is a newly invented Diri writing [LORD]+[HOUSE][75] designating on a metalinguistic level this god as "Lord (of the) House."

On the iconic level E$_2$ depicts the front of a building, as can be shown by a vast number of Uruk III period sealings. KID, in contrast, is the depiction of a reed mat (in an Akkadian loan as *kītu*); whence the *Lautwert* lil$_2$ is derived is, at the first glance, not obvious. It is suggestive to connect KID [REED MAT] –which in ED source is the common way to write the name of Ninlil– with the *Lautwert* /lil/, the Sumerian word for "wind; breeze." It may therefore well be that Keetman (2020: 362) is correct when he writes: "Das Zeichen ist das Bild einer Matte oder eines Vorhangs, was zu diesem Wort passen könnte."[76] This nicely ties in with our suggestion: the reed mats may have served as shutter separating inner and outer spaces.

Be that as it may, the ED differentiation of the different script forms for Enlil and Ninlil as observed in paleographic history may suggest the following: on a semantic level Enlil is described as governing the house(hold), his consort Ninlil is responsible for the inner quarters, perhaps(!) indicating a gender-based differentiation of responsibilities becoming salient in ED times.

2.6 The case of /zabar/ or /zubar/

The earliest attestations of the word for Bronze /zabar/ date to the EDIIIa period, written either as UD.KA.BAR (CUSAS 11, 11 passim, WF 152 o 2:3) or KAxUD.BAR.[77] I find Krebernik's suggestion to interpret this form as a mixed logographic-phonetic writing for UD$^{zu2\text{-}bar}$ very convincing.[78] It is easily understood that Akkadian *siparru(m)* is derived from a form /zubar / or /sipa r/,[79] whereas the later form /zabar/ may be perceived in the light of similar "vowel harmonies."[80] Consequently, / zubar / and /zabar/ "bronze" is, as urud(u/a) "copper" (Kluge 1989: 188), a "Wanderwort" or "Kulturwort" transmitted to different languages and travelling with metallurgical expertise.

The lexicon (ePSD2) gives for the meaning of zabar an extremely wide semantic range: "bronze; arrowhead; weapon; metal mirror; measuring vessel made of bronze; a metal bowl; (to be) shiny; (to be) bright, pure" and referring to Akk. *ebbu* ; *ḫutpu* ; *kakku* ; *mušālu* ; *namru* ; *qû* ; *sappu and siparru.*

We further note that /zubar/, again as urud(a/u), is often used as a graphic classifier in changing position to its head. In several cases, however, it seems to be a pronounced part of nominal compounds and should be compared with other material classifiers.[81]

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[68] The seal Figure 7 (Schroer and Keel 2005: 349 no. 251) is quite interesting; it seems to conflate the *Bügelschaft* and the normal door wing with the concept of the rising sun. We note just in passing, that the sun-god Šamaš/Utu (and later Marduk) also has a strong connection to incantation rituals.

[69] Buchanan 1966: pl. 27: 344; Pittman 1987: 23 fig. 11 cf. Black and Green 2006: 166–167.

[70] cf.: [...]^{r}kid^{1}-da ^{r}šid^{1} "...] "counted on a mat" (SF 026 + TSŠ 0124: o vi 1) or še kid-^{r}da^{1} šid-šid "barley counted on a mat" (OIP 099, 255: o vi 10).

[71] The suggestion of Steinkeller 1995: 702 that KID is "almost certainly a variant" of E$_2$ did not stand the test of a more detailed paleographic study.

[72] Note: the Uruk sign list distinguishes: KID-a KID-b KID-c from the forms E$_2$-a E$_2$-b E$_2$-c.

[73] This is clearly evidenced by the Uruk III PNN en-e$_2$-ti/til$_3$ according to Krebernik 2013: 190, 193: "der En (Priesterfürst) ist einer, der das 'Haus' (E, gemeint ist wohl eine zentrale Institution, etwa der Tempelhaushalt) am Leben erhält (TIL)", paralleled by the younger ED III name munus-e$_2$-ti/til$_3$.

[74] See Englund 1998: 75 and Krebernik 2021: 14–15, see now also Keetman 2021: 358–362.

[75] See Krebernik 1998: 284. A more extensive discussion of the paleography is now provided by Wang 2011: 14–16 and 41–59.

[76] Reference courtesy M. Worthington.

[77] Note also the contemporary variants UD.KA-AŠ and/or KA.UD.AŠ.

[78] Krebernik 2007: 83.

[79] Krebernik 2007: 83 with fn. 93 has argued that the word travelling from Elamite /zubar/ travels to the west, and via Κύπρος (c p. Mycenaean Greek *ku-pi-ri-jo*) and Latin cuprum is the precise etymology of Cyprus and the Indo-European name for the metal "Kupfer", "copper" and so on.

[80] Keetman 2005: 12. A similar case seems to be bala(g) = *pilakkum* "spindle" for which, although graphically distinguished, a relationship with /bulug/ = *pulukku* "needle" seems possible.

[81] On this see Selz 2021, esp. p. 163.

The most extended lexical account of /zabar/, /zubar/ may be found in Ura tablet XII (data derived via DCCLT, accessed January 2022); the first 10 lines of Seg. 1 – showing the same semantic grid[82] as the translations provided in ePSD2 have:

Table 1. Lexical and semantic meaning of /zabar/, /zubar/

Seg.1, 1	[zabar]	*si-par-ri*	Bronze
Seg.1, 2	[zabar]	*qu-u₂*	[bronze] = (bronze) 1 liter measuring vessel
Seg.1, 3	zabar	*sap-pu*	Bronze = (bronze) bowl
Seg.1, 4	zabar	*kak-ku*	Bronze = (bronze) weapon
Seg.1, 5	zabar	*el-lu*	Bronze = pure (bronze)
Seg.1, 6	zabar	*eb-bu*	Bronze = bright (bronze)
Seg.1, 7	zabar	*nam-ri*	Bronze = shiny (bronze)
Seg.1, 8	zabar	*šen-nu*	Bronze = (bronze) cauldron
Seg.1, 9	zabar	*ḫu-up-pu*	Bronze = (bronze) *huppu* drum
Seg.1, 10	zabar	*mu-ša₂-lu*	Bronze = (bronze) mirror

It is obvious that the Akkadian equivalents provided by ePSD2 are derived from this section: *ebbu*; *ḫutpu*; *kakku*; *mušālu*; *namru*; *qû*; *sappu*; *siparru*. Only *elllu* (often a synonym to *ebbu*) and *še/annu* "a bronze cauldron" (but cf. *qû* "bronze (liter) vessel") are listed only later among the lexical evidence. It seems clear that all these entries are derived via synecdochic or metonymic procedures.

The meaning "arrowhead" (for which ePSD2 gives no contextual references) is obviously derived from /hud / or ḫutpu/ḫudbu, older ḫudba. The diri-writing PA.KAK [STAFF]+[NAIL/PEG] with phonophores transcribed as ḫu_ud_pu is descriptive of an arrow. All this information was lost when lexically zabar acquired the meaning "arrowhead". The meaning clearly evolved from *ḫutpu ša siparri* as found in other (partially earlier) lexical tradition (Ea 01 227; CT 35, pl. 01–08, BM 108862 r i 27a; OB Nippur Ea 515a; CT 11, pl. 37, K 08284+ r ii' 20').

What follows then in ll. 11–17 are descriptions of material specifications, including bronze alloys. It is interesting to see that *namru* (l. 14) is here rendered as zabar-zalag₂.

Table 2. List of material descriptions of /zabar/

Seg.1, 11	zabar saĝ	*re-eš-tu-u₂*	First quality bronze
Seg.1, 12	zabar ḫuš-a	*ḫu-uš-šu-u₂*	Ruddy bronze
Seg.1, 13	zabar ḫuš-a	*ru-uš-šu-u₂*	Ruddy bronze
Seg.1, 14	zabar zalag₂	*nam-ri*	Shiny bronze
Seg.1, 15	[zabar] ḫi-a	*bil-la-a-tum*	[Bronze] alloy
Seg.1, 16	zabar imin-bi	*si-par-ri su-ub-bu-tu₂*	Alloy with one seventh part bronze
Seg.1, 17	šen₆ zabar	*šu-uḫ-tum*	Verdigris

All the following lines are then devoted to bronze as material classification of objects. It seems reasonable to assume that in many cases –especially in language pragmatics– the classifier remained unpronounced, but of course this was not necessarily so. The lack of the material reference in the Akkadian translation also does not indicate that *siparru* was inevitably absent in Akkadian, and thus only a "determinative" or a classifier always left unpronounced. Be that as it may, the list (as many others) is, of course, highly important for the study of *realia*, here especially for the 1st millennium from which this standard list originates.

I suggest there are three different motivations behind the entries of Ura 12 seg. 1, 1–133: First we find a set of meanings, based on ellipsis via metonymic and synecdochic procedures –this seems to be especially relevant for the semantic evolution of the word. Next, the material quality of copper –its appearance– is collected, clearly relevant for the identification of this metal. Third, a vast number of items are added which possibly could be manufactured from or with this metal, providing important insight on the production tools and the material world.

Based on the synecdochic use, zabar = *mušālu* becomes part of a derived nominal compounds. zabar-šu; zabar₃-šu; zabar^{urud}-šu ; ^{urud}zabar-šu and designates "a hand mirror" but also "un recipient" and in figurative use even "le bien aimée."[83] As for the profession zabar-dab₅[84] Sallaberger suggested a connection to the office of a divination priest (1998: 187–188; cf. also Waetzoldt 2006: 178–184); the etymology of the word might be indicated by its co-occurrence with cup-bearers (sagi/ šagia(-mah)) and officials in charge of alcoholic beverages. Zabar-dab₅ might therefore originally have been "(the one) holding

[82] Other lexical text, as e.g. OB Nippur Ura 02: 534–591 are similar, but show a less clear arrangement.

[83] See Attinger 2021: 1151 with fn. 3707.

[84] The secondary literature is collected by Attinger 2021: 1151 fn. 3706.

the bronze" > "(the one) holding the cup."[85] It is well-known that such titles are often used metonymically and that courtiers with such titles may have executed quite different tasks.

3. Conclusions

Based on the hypothesis that cuneiform script evolved at the intersection of visual and oral/aural modes of communications we attempted to show that both domains contributed to the evolution of writing, historical semantics, and that their proper assessment is essential for any understanding of the process of Mesopotamian semiosis. Inevitably, several suggestions provided here will be subject to further clarification or falsification. There can be little doubt that our approach will turn out to be helpful in order to understand the specific hermeneutics of the Mesopotamian emic traditions. Certainly, the approach chosen and the examples provided do not cover all the aspects of the pertinent semiotic processes, and disagreement and even complete rejection of some of the interpretations may arise. Future evaluations of the empirical facts should and certainly will improve many of the interpretations proposed here. The evolution of writing at the intersection of visual and aural/oral communication with its bi-modal properties is a highly important source for an improved understanding of the *Weltanschauung* of Ancient Mesopotamia and especially well-suited to explore its hermeneutical strands. Therefore, I believe that in the future the semiotic approach applied in this paper will provide important insights into the epistemic world of these cultures.

[85] The same interpretation is given by Attinger 2021: 1151.

Abbreviations used

For abbreviations used according to general Assyriological practice; see <http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=abbreviations_for_assyriology#g>.

All electronic sources were last addressed in January 2022 and reflect the state of this time.

CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, <https://cdli.ucla.edu>.
DCCLT	*The Digital Corpus of Cuneiform Lexical Texts* <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/dcclt/index.html>.
ePSD	electronic Pennsylvanian Sumerian Dictionary, < http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/>.
ePSD2	*The Electronic Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary*, <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ epsd2/>.
ETCSL	*The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*, http://etcsl.orinst. ox.ac.uk/#; Uruk-sign list: < https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/SignLists/protocuneiform/archsigns.html>.

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SECOND PART:
THE HUMAN WORLD

Chapter 13:
The threat of the women warriors:
From the Arab women to the Amazons[1]

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Abstract. The subject of this article is Relief no. 9 in Room L in Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh, depicting a horrifying scene of Assyrian troops ruthlessly slaying Arab women. I suggest that the message conveyed in this act of extremely cruel punishment originated from a gender perception. The behavior of the Arab women, who assumed active male behavior in the eighth–seventh centuries BCE, harmed and threatened the gender-cultural order. Accordingly, the unique and extreme Assyrian cruelty towards them should be seen as an ideological statement, a male-gender warning against any female deviation from the norm. The Assyrian imperial expansion and influence, reaching its apex in the seventh century BCE inspired Greek literature and mythology. The stories about the Arab women leading soldiers on the battlefield, disseminated by various mediators across the Greek-speaking lands, must have influenced the consolidation of the Amazons myth.

Keywords: Late Iron Age, Assurbanipal's North Palace, Arab queens, women warriors, Iliad, amazons, gendered violence.

Introduction

The profound threat to men that is personified by women on the battlefield, an exclusive male arena, was recently illustrated by the Yazidi women who fought against ISIS. These warrior-women were described as a terrible threat to the males who confronted them. Falling on the battlefield at the hands of a woman was conceived as a transgression against nature, and one that may harm their fate in the next world. This was well-described in one of the Yazidi warrior-women's words: "ISIS warriors believe if they die in battle ... killed at the hands of female fighters, they go straight to hell."[2]

In this paper, I would like to turn the spotlight on the scene of extreme violence against Arab women, depicted in a wall relief from the North Palace of Assurbanipal (668–631 BCE) at Nineveh. The relief, known as Slab no. 9,[3] portrays Assyrian soldiers raiding an Arab camp. It was found in Room L, sometimes called the "Arab Room" (Reade 1964: 8; Dubovský 2009: 400; Bennet 2021: 122).[4] According to Dubovský (2009: 400), the reliefs in Room L depict two campaigns against the same enemy, and he ascribes Slab no. 9 to the second Arab campaign of Assurbanipal (641–638 BCE).

Looking at the plan of the North Palace (Figure 1), Room L is adjacent to Throne Room M on its west side.[5] Throne Room M enjoys a central and prime location and gives access from the spacious eastern courtyard (O) to the inner western courtyard (J). Assurbanipal's great campaigns against Babylon, Elam, and Egypt were displayed in this room. While Room M depicted Assurbanipal's victories over great enemies that threatened Assyria, Room L was entirely dedicated to the victory over the nomadic Arab tribes (Dubovský 2009: 400–403), with particular attention to the violence against women. At first, the prime location and high visibility of the relief in Room L seems incongruous when compared with the weight of the scenes in Throne Room M. As I will argue below, this choice was deliberate, emphasizing the significance the Assyrians ascribed to the battle against the Arabs. The message conveyed in this room was no less important to the Assyrians than that illustrated in Throne Room M. The narrative was arranged along the walls of Room L, culminating close to the door leading to Courtyard J with the aftermath of the war as depicted in Slab no. 9 (Dubovský 2009: 412; Bennet 2021: 124). The latter shows the horrifying scene of Assyrian troops ruthlessly slaying Arab women. As part of the whole narrative of the war against the Arabs, Slab no. 9, the center of interest here, spans three registers (Figure 2).[6]

[1] This article began as a vague idea during one of Tallay Ornan's courses on Neo-Assyrian reliefs, which was an eye-opener to visual representation in the Assyrian media. Typically to Tallay, she encouraged me to continue developing this subject, inspiring me with her immense knowledge and wisdom. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for her support.

[2] PBS: Public Broadcasting Service, Virginia, USA, May 3th, 2015, viewed 01 September 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/kurdish-women-soldiers-confronting-fears-isis>

[3] Today in the British Museum – BM 124927.

[4] It is generally accepted that Slab no. 9 depicts an Assyrian attack against an Arab camp (Dubovský 2009: 412, with earlier literature).

[5] Barnett (1976: 29–30) identified this room as part of the Throne Room suite.

[6] Measurements of Slab no. 9 (BM 124927): L=134.16 cm, W=162.56 cm, D=25.40 cm.

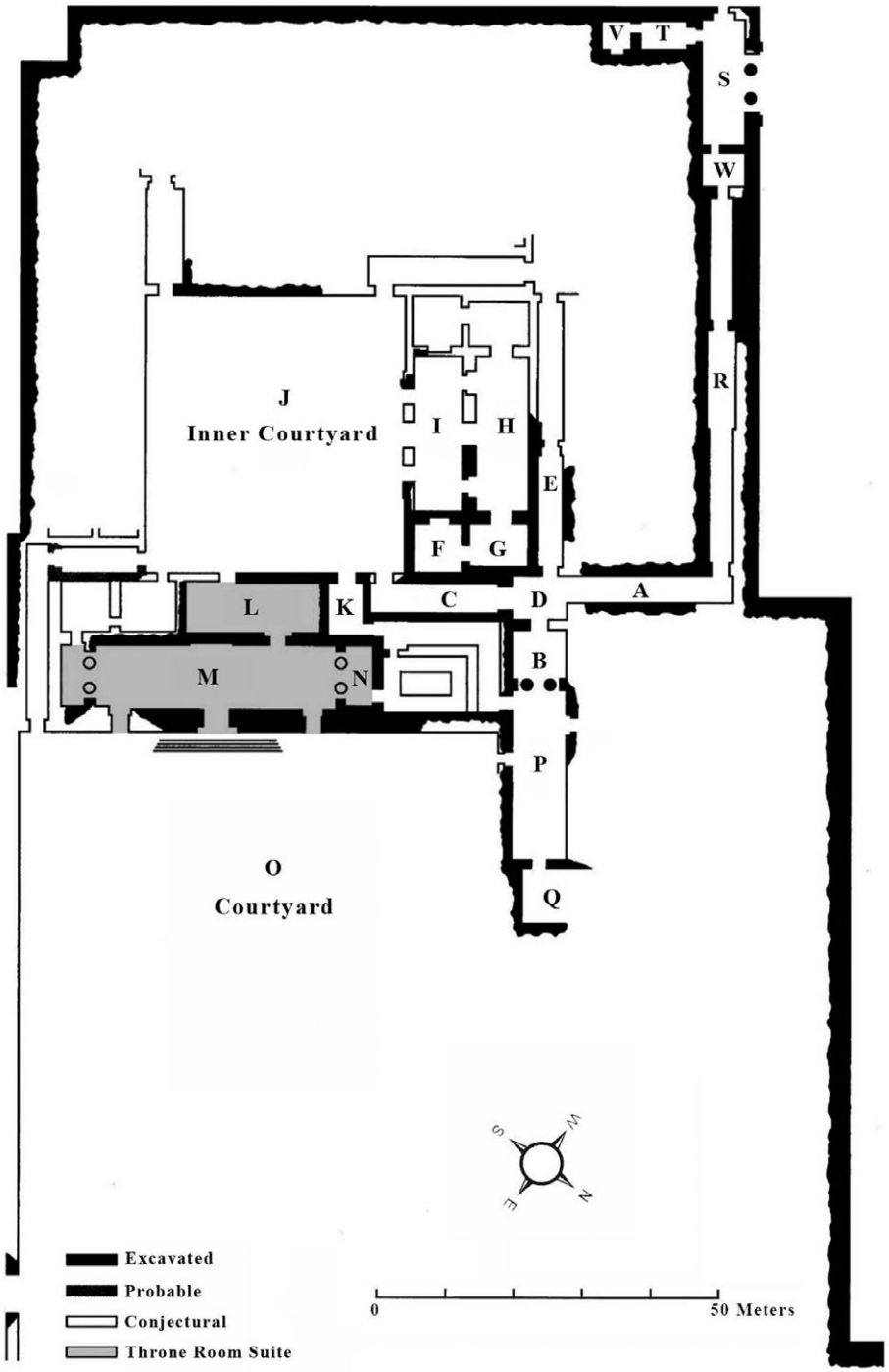

Figure 1. Plan of Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh. Rooms L, M and N are in grey (re-drawn by Ruhama Bunfil, after Barnett 1976: fig. 7).

Figure 2. Slab no. 9: The brutal violence against the Arab women. BM 124927, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Slab no. 9 depicts an attack on an Arab encampment (Opitz 1931: 8; Eph'al 1984: 151: no. 518; Nadali 2004: 772–775). Eight tent episodes showing the Assyrians attacking Arab women and men have survived. Six of these are complete or nearly complete, and two are partial depictions.[7] The three registers of the relief describe the events in a continuous narrative method; they can be read not only in a linear order, but also each on its own, and at the same time along a vertical-diagonal axis that crosses the relief's registers from right to left (Albenda 1998; Nadali 2004; Dubovský 2009: 406–412, 415–416). The continuous narrative reading connects disparate events and makes it possible to combine the individual scenes into one terrifying story.

The upper register

At the top right of the relief, two Arab women are seen inside a tent. The woman on the right is standing, her left hand raised in a gesture of supplication or submission (Davis *et al.* 2008: 35, 37).[8] The woman on the left is about to fall into the tent. She is attacked by an Assyrian soldier who hits her in the abdomen "using a spear, or a knife, to slit the woman's womb from down upwards" (Dubovský 2009: 413). At the top left of this register, a woman raises her hands as an Assyrian soldier hits her on the head. The right side of this scene is worn, but it probably depicted an Assyrian soldier standing above a sprawling Arab figure.

Middle register

Part of a tent is depicted at the far left, showing an Assyrian soldier standing and the lower part of a falling Arab woman. In the central tent, two women are visible: one is begging for her life, while an Assyrian soldier is about to hit her; the other is on the ground

[7] Dubovský (2009: 413) mentions seven episodes, but at the far left of the middle register there is one more tent (see below).

[8] According to Battini (2022: 39), in the context of deportation this gesture is stronger than the act of submission, and presumes the acceptance of the Assyrian divine and royal will.

Figure 3. Slab no. 9: Close-up of the middle register.

and an Assyrian soldier attacks her with a spear and steps on her abdomen.[9] The scene that is perhaps most disturbing in its details appears on the right (Figure 3). Two soldiers attack a woman – the soldier on the right holds her head and is pulling her hands back; the soldier on the left is in the process of ripping open the pregnant woman and inserting his hands inside her womb (Dubovský 2009: 394). The foot of the fetus is being pulled out of the mother's womb. An Arab man on the right raises his hands, desperately trying to prevent the horrible act, but is attacked by another Assyrian soldier.[10]

The bottom register

This register is the last in terms of the order of events, and it shows the encampment that had burned down on its occupants. There are three tents: a dead woman is seen in the left tent, a dead woman and a man in the middle tent, and in the third tent a man's legs are partially visible on the right edge of the register. Gender differentiation of the dead figures is expressed by the males being nude, while the women are fully dressed (see also Battini 2022: 37).

It must be remembered that violence in general, and violence directed at the enemy in particular, is common in Assyrian descriptions, written and visual alike (Barnett 1976: pls. XVIII, XIX; Albenda 1987: 20; Dubovský 2009: 394; Fuchs 2009; Bagg 2016). The Assyrian visual representations describe in detail the atrocities they committed both on the battlefield and in the aftermath of the battle, depicting them with terrifying realism (Bagg 2016: 57). Such scenes express the superiority of the Assyrian army over the Empire's enemies and would have served as a means of warning (Bleibtreu 1991: 57). Studies have shown that memory of visual images can be influenced by perceptions provoked by different motivators (Barry 1997: 16–19 with further literature). Memory is particularly affected by emotions – "the more intense the emotion aroused by an image, the longer the brain will record it. Images of violence are one of the strongest ways to stimulate emotions, conveying and holding a political message" (Battini 2022: 34). Bagg grouped 22 types of atrocities mentioned in Neo-Assyrian inscriptions and 56 in visual representations, all acts committed after combat, consisting of painful executions and other brutal humiliations, and brutal treatment of dead bodies (Bagg 2016: figs. 6.1 and 6.12). Indeed, violence on the battlefield is part of the reality of war, not exclusive to Assyrian media.[11]

[9] Nadali (2004: 75) suggests that the scene describes two stages of an attack on the same woman.

[10] Parpola and Watanabe (1988: 47, fig. 13) and Marcus (1995) interpret the scene as a rape of an Arab woman.

[11] Bagg (2016: 71) argues that "we should rather speak of brutalities

However, the violence directed against women as depicted by the Assyrians on Relief no. 9, is exceptional, without parallel in any other Assyrian visual representation and described only once in the written Assyrian sources that came down to us (Cogan 1983).[12] There is no other description of such extreme cruelty against women, and no such explicit images of acts against women are known on Neo-Assyrian reliefs (Dubovský 2009: 394). The fact that this depiction is one of a kind, and not in the positive sense of the word, indicates its abnormality. Furthermore, this violent scene is the only brutality scene in Assurbanipal's throne room suite. In contrast, all other brutal scenes, 18 in number were located in more private wings of the palace (Bagg 2016: 69). This emphasizes the significance the Assyrians ascribed to the visibility of this particular scene, which addresses those entering the throne room, such as Assyrian and foreign courtiers and dignitaries (see below).

Given the unusually extreme violence against the Arab women in Slab no. 9, one wonders why such cruelty was directed at them. Who were those Arab women, and what were the actions that brought upon them and their unborn children such a terrible fate? Inquiry into the characteristics of the contemporary political reality of the Arabian tribes may reveal the background for the unique Assyrian reaction.

The Arab queens

A socio-political situation that distinguished the Arabs in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE is that women sometimes operated as rulers. The names of two such Arab queens – Zabibê and Samsi – are recorded already in the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE; e.g., RINAP 1, 15:2, 27:2b; 20:18, 42:9b respectively). These women leaders were called *šarratu aribi* in the Assyrian texts — queen. It must be emphasized that such a title was never used to describe women from the royal families in Assyria itself. From the Assyrian records we learn that for about a hundred years there were Arab women who acted as queens (Bennet 2021: 38–44 with earlier literature). They actively participated in the Arab trade and led armies against the Assyrian kings.

A late-eighth-century BCE Assyrian relief from the central palace of Tiglath-pileser III at Kalhu, shows an Arab woman fleeing from the battlefield on the back of a camel; her hands are raised in supplication (Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. XVII). Some scholars suggested that this figure should be identified with Samsi, the queen of the Arabs mentioned in the Assyrian sources (733–715 BCE; Matthiae 1996: 80, fig. 4.6; Retsö 2003: 133; Bennet 2021: 21, 100, fig. 12). Tiglath-pileser III attacked the Arab queen during his second western campaign. The Assyrian king describes raiding her encampment near Mt. Saqurri in 733 BCE (Tadmor 1994: 140–142), and claims to have looted 30,000 camels and "500 (sacks) of all kinds of spices" from Samsi (Eph'aI 1984: 35–36). Samsi is also mentioned by Sargon, who takes credit for exacting exotic tribute (ivory, aromatics) from her (Byrne 2003:12). Hence, Samsi's active military role in leading Arab forces into the battlefield is attested by the Assyrian textual records and probably in visual depictions (Bennet 2021: 101–104, 129).

In the seventh century BCE, Adiya, the last Arab queen recorded in the Assyrian texts, appears in the accounts of Assurbanipal's first Arab campaign (650–647 BCE; Eph'al 1984: 143; Gerardi 1992). Dubovský (2009: 402) describes Slab no. 9 as the aftermath of Assurbanipal's second campaign against the Arabs, the battle against the Arab queen Adiya. She too is described in the Assyrians annals as a military leader playing an active role in the campaign. The Assyrians defeated her, her camp was plundered, and her tents burned down:

> "[I inflicted a heavy] defeat on A[diya, the queen of the land of the Arabs. I burned] her tents [with fire. I captured] her alive (and) brought her [to Assyria], together with the plunder of [her land]" (RINAP 5, 8 ix 1).

Apparently, there is a direct connection between the special status Arab women enjoyed in the eighth–seventh centuries BCE, the active battlefield role they fulfilled, and the brutal violence against them, as depicted in Slab No. 9. According to Nadali (2004: 73, no. 55), this violence could have been related to the frequent mention in the Assyrian annals of women serving as queens of Arab tribes, therefore deserving a different treatment from other captive women. Dubovský (2009: 417–418) proposes that such violence was inflicted only in extreme cases. The violence against Arab women was considered a divine punishment for the Arab sinful behavior on the battlefield and their disloyalty hence justified. Evidently, the Assyrians delivered a warning message by these acts of atrocity, aimed at eliminating present and future Arab resistance. Bennet (2021: 124–129) asserts that the violent actions were aimed explicitly against Arab women. Moreover, she convincingly argues that the outcome of Assurbanipal's interaction with Adiye, and his previous knowledge of the leading status and military role the Arab queens fulfilled within Arab society, provoked the harsh treatment against them. The description in Relief no. 9 was meant as a warning that women on the battlefield

committed by the Assyrians than of Assyrian brutality."

[12] The written source is a middle Assyrian "heroic poem" (VAT 13833) celebrating the victories of Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BCE). Cogan (1983) remarks on four biblical references describing murderous attacks upon pregnant women (2 Kings 8:11–12; 15:16; Hosea 13:16; Amos 1:13). These references to similar atrocities highlight a uniform formula that may allude to an Assyrian source.

deserve the same treatment as men, and expresses a threat to the continued existence of the Arab tribes.

These interpretations seek to explain the connection between the status of Arab women and their horrific punishment. However, they do not clarify why their behavior was considered sinful by the Assyrians. In other words, why were women leaders and active military warriors who commanded armies on the battlefield considered to commit a crime that deserved such an anomalous reaction? The absence of a convincing explanation, coupled with the fact that such brutalities were directed at women, begs the question of whether gender was a motivation.

Slab no. 9 – A gender-oriented interpretation

As no records relating directly to gender issues survive from the Ancient Near East, we turn now to later contemplations of gender in antiquity. This leads us to Thomas Laqueur's 1990 work *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, and the "one-sex model", asserting that the human body was not considered a classifier for determining gender and/or sex. Gender was considered primary; sex was dependent on it. The socio-cultural system transcended the biological order (Laqueur 1990: 8, 25). The body in the pre-modern world was the epiphenomenon of the gender, described by Cahana (2016: 101) as "the primacy of gender." Men and women were seen as components on one vertical axis; their position on this axis was determined according to their level of perfection: at the top of the axis is the male body; at the bottom, the female body. Any behavioral change may affect the individual's position on this axis. Judith Butler, in her *Gender Trouble*, considers gender as conceived through continuous performance (Butler 1990: 187), "not monolithic and stable but volatile" (N'Shea 2018: 318). Masculine and feminine are constructs, unstable identities, that need to be continuously performed (Bahrani 2001: 146). Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is not static, and subject to constant threat (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). It requires continuous performativity to maintain its position.

Since the purpose of visual renderings in the Ancient Near East was not to represent reality but to express an ideological message, semiotic rather than mimetic (Suter 2012: 437), the manner in which the female and male characters are presented is not incidental. A significant mode differentiating between male and female is activity versus passivity. This manner of representation has an unequivocal ideological message: females, human and divine, were perceived as inactive. Active were men and gods. Females diverging from the accepted norms threaten the entire gender system. Ancient Assyrian texts and reliefs convey an explicit message about the gendered nature of violence: war and military valor were exclusively the domain of men (N'shea 2018: 330).

A prominent example is Ishtar, the goddess of war. In the texts she may appear as initiating sexual contact, she may be violent, wild, unpredictable, chaotic, unrestrained, and therefore threatening. However, in visual representations, she is static and inactive — although she carries weapons, she does not actively use them. Ishtar also represents a feminine ideal, and therefore cannot be seen to execute masculine, active actions that exceed the boundaries of her gender; this could endanger her position and the general hegemonic social order. The killing of the lion at the hands of the king symbolizes his victory over the enemies of Assyria and of Ishtar; the king defeats the lion for her sake (Ornan 2023). The subjugation of the lion conveys a message of control over the wild and the chaos (see below). This was a ceremonial representation, which reached its peak in the time of king Assurbanipal.

What meaning was being communicated then by presenting the ripping of the women's womb in Slab no. 9 in the royal throne suite in Assurbanipal's palace? I believe that the extremely cruel punishment of the Arab women originated from a gender perception. The Assyrians, representing the hegemonic male world-power of their time, cannot visually depict active women in battle, as this is considered a gender abnormality, in which a woman intrudes into the male arena of the battlefield. This is why while Arab queens are described as active warriors in the Assyrian texts, in the visual representation, Samsi cannot be seen as an active warrior, but only as a supplicant (above). Arab women are absent from the reliefs decorating the "Arab Room" (Room L) – but when they are depicted, as in Slab no. 9, it is within the conventions of Assyrian palace reliefs, shown fully dressed and inactive. The manner of their depiction in the scene that describes the culmination of the aftermath of the war was intentionally selected, and should be seen against the broader background of Arab queens acting as warriors leading armies on the battlefield.

The blatant and extraordinary violence against the Arab women warriors must be understood as a reaction to their active male behavior (see also Miller 2021: 101, no. 34), a role in which they harmed and threatened the gender-cultural order. Accordingly, the unique and extreme Assyrian cruelty against them should be seen as an age-old ideological statement about the status and behavior of women. This is a male-gender warning against any female deviation from these norms. Furthermore, being warriors, the Arab women also damaged the cosmic order of their time. The Assyrian king mediates between humans and the divine worlds

and is responsible for prevailing over the wilderness, maintaining order, and preventing chaos (Suter 2011: 224). He must therefore act with all his might against even the smallest deviation (see also Miller 2021: 84, 86). The Arab warrior women had to be annihilated – the enormity of the transgression requires an extreme reaction. Following this argument, it is possible to understand not only the message relayed through the horror of the representation, but also its central location in the palace.

The potential audience of Room L's reliefs should also be considered in this light. Bagg (2016: 65–70) pointed out that brutality scenes in the Assyrian palaces were not confined to the public space; they are found primarily in the more private wings with more restricted access - nearly twice as many. Gods are probably among the intended recipients of an essential part of the Neo-Assyrian reliefs (Battini 2022: 44; see also Bagg 2016: 66, 69; fig. 6.12). As noted earlier, the brutal scene depicted in Slab no. 9, is the only brutality scene located in Assurbanipal's throne room suite, whereas all the others (18) were located in more private wings of the palace. This emphasizes the significance ascribed by the Assyrians to the visibility of this particular scene and the complexity of the message it conveyed. The intended audience were the palace courtiers, as well as Assyrian and foreign dignitaries and visitors; at the same time, Assurbanipal sent a message to the gods of Assur telling them that he restores the gender order.

The horrible gender-related punishment directed toward the Arab women shown in Slab no. 9 reminds us of another example of female warriors – in the Greek myth.

"… he slew the Amazons women the peers of men" Iliad 6, 186[13]

In Greek myth, Amazons are described as women warriors who defied norms of gender. They are mentioned in Homer's story of the Trojan War the *Iliad,* dated by many scholars to the mid-eighth century (e.g., Janko 1982: 228–233). Others support a mid-seventh century BCE date (West 1995; Burkert 1976; Ziemann 2019: 265–267; Finkelberg 2017: 37–38). The Homeric poem contains only two references to the *Amazones antianeirai* – "Amazons equivalent to men." In both cases, the narrative perspective places them in the past (Blok 1995: 146–147). Outside the *Iliad*, yet still within the archaic epic contained in the *Aethiopis,* the Amazon queen Penthesileia is mentioned in the epic narratives on Troy, as the opponent of Achilles. The consequences of this confrontation were the defeat and killing of the Amazon queen at the hands of Achilles. The *Aethiopis*, containing earlier songs, did not fully crystalize until after the completion of the *Iliad* (West 2003; Finkelberg 2018: 23).

The Amazon myth initially described an unknown female people, about which nothing was known. Only in the fifth century BCE onward does the Amazon myth get further accounts (Blok 1995: 152), describing them as monstrous women warriors who aggressively invaded the battlefield – the ultimate male arena. They were considered to have pushed back social, cultural, and geographical boundaries, symbolizing the other, the wild, whose origins are in the barbarian lands in the East (Del Lucchese 2019: 46–47).[14] In their defiant behavior, they deviated from the norms of Greek women, challenging Greek social hierarchy and gender order (see also Tyrrell 1984: 27-28).

As already noted, in recent years, some have placed the Homeric poems in the second half of the seventh century BCE (e.g., Finkelberg 2018: 33),[15] a time when the Assyrian imperial expansion reached its zenith. Under Assurbanipal, the Assyrian empire expanded over the whole Near East. Assurbanipal also extended his political influence farther to the West, as far as Lydia in Western Anatolia. Lydia acted as an important bridge facilitating Greek reception of Assyrian culture (Lanfranchi 2011: 229). The "Assyrianization" of Lydia affected the Aegean coast, which was within Lydia's immediate sphere of influence (Parpola 2003: 102; see below). By the middle of the seventh century BCE, the empire's influence had reached the Aegean in the west and had consolidated in Egypt in the south and the Elamite Empire in the east (Parpola 2003: 99).

The cultural, political, commercial, and military interaction of the Assyrian Empire with the Anatolian and Aegean civilizations during the Iron Age has been the focus of many studies (for comprehensive literature see Dezső and Vér 2013: no. 4). These studies have almost unanimously shown that in the Orientalized Period, the Assyrian influence can be detected in every aspect of the Greek culture. The Greeks' special receptivity to Near Eastern material culture was accompanied by Near Eastern literary influence (Burkert 1992; West 1997). Within the Assyrian worldwide control, there were several intermediators who disseminated the

[13] Homer 1924. *The Iliad*, with an English translation by A.T. Murray. London/ New York: William Heinemann/GP Putnam's Sons.

[14] A common notion seeks the origin of the Amazons in Asia Minor, the coast of the Black Sea and Scythia (e.g., Blok 1995: 275–276). Mayor suggests that the Amazons reflect the actual historical practices of nomadic women from the Eurasian steppes (2014 with further literature). However, it should be noted that the majority of accounts describing Scythian-Sarmatian women, whom the Amazons are often compared to, are from the fifth century onwards. The Amazons' significant role in Greek epic during the fifth century is likely linked to the Persian Wars (among others Tyrrell 1984: 125; Stewart 1995).

[15] In Finkelberg own words "In the present state of our knowledge, however, the mid-seventh-century date for the composition of the *Iliad* emerges as a more robust scenario than either the mid-eighth century or the late-sixth-century one" (2017: 38).

Neo-Assyrian cultural influence, *inter alia* – Assyrian literature, "particularly in the field of *intellectual life*" (Parpola 2003: 99). As this subject is beyond the scope of the present paper, suffice it to mention the Near Eastern élites (Parpola 2003), and the Greek mercenaries (Luraghi 2006: 35–42; Ziemann 2019) who served in Near Eastern armies already by the late eighth century BCE.[16] Both were important cultural carriers, disseminating knowledge they absorbed in their host Near Eastern cultures back to the Greek-speaking lands.

The composition of the Homeric poems was possibly, then, contemporaneous with the expansion of the Assyrian empire and its influence, which reached its apex in the seventh century BCE (Lanfranchi 2011: 226). Since much of the ideological world of the Eastern Mediterranean was inspired by Assyrian supremacy, scholars have concluded direct Near Eastern influence on Greek literature. In his seminal study, West (1997) argued for Near Eastern influence on Greek literature and mythologies. A prominent example would be the specific correspondences that the *Iliad* and the Epic of Gilgamesh share (West 1997: 336, 402; see also Ziemann 2021).[17]

Against this background of Assyria's cultural and political influence on the Near Eastern and east Mediterranean civilizations, I suggest that the stories about the Arab women leading soldiers on the battlefield and deviating from gender norms, exceeded the boundaries of Assyria proper, and were disseminated across the Eastern Mediterranean. The Arab women warriors were considered so anomalous and order-shaking, that they reached the Assyrian media, both textual and visual. The placement of Slab no. 9 in a central, highly visible location in Assurbanipal's palace is a manifestation of the significance ascribed by the Assyrians to the dissemination of the message of unequivocal response toward the deviating women and the retaining of world gender-order. Considering the genuine descriptions of Arab women in Assyrian sources of the late eighth and seventh centuries on the one hand, and the motivation the Assyrian king had to present himself to Assyria and the whole ancient world as responsible for maintaining order and preventing chaos on the other, these stories must have been widely spread. As noted, the Neo-Assyrian influence was disseminated through different agents into the Greek-speaking lands. Hence, it is quite probable that the stories about the Arab women warriors reached the Greeks and influenced the myth of the Amazons, which, as we have seen, continued to develop in the fifth century and even later.

In this regard it is worth noting *The Suppliants,* a Greek play by Aeschylus (ca. 525/524 – 456/455 BCE). This play provides a firsthand example of the way oral traditions found their way into other cultural contexts, sometimes disrupted, but still maintaining an outstanding impression of the original source. In this play, the king of Argos notes that the Danaidai women who begged his help did not dress or behave like Greeks. Noteworthy, the otherness of these women, also referred to as exotic nomad women riding camels, is closely associated in this text with the Amazons:

> "What I hear you say, women strangers, is incredible to me—how your descent is from Argos here; for you very much more resemble women of Libya... and your male ancestors have struck the likeness of Cyprian character on your female forms. The Indians, I hear, have nomadic women who ride side-saddle over the land on camels fast as horses, and who live as neighbours to the Ethiopians; and if you had bows, I should certainly have imagined you to be those Amazons who have no men and live on meat" (Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 276–289; transl. Collard 2008).

The mention of nomad women riding camels – a most characteristic Arab feature, echoed in this fifth-century BCE Greek source – manifests the Greeks' acquaintance with and cultural memory of the Arab women warriors.

[16] A siege of a fortified city in which Greek hoplites are seen as mercenaries in the Assyrian army, while other Greek hoplites defend the attacked city, is depicted on a late eighth–seventh century silver bowl found in a tomb near Amathus, Cyprus (today in the British museum; BM 123053) (see Myres 1933).

[17] This is not to say that a Neo-Assyrian influence necessarily precludes other agents responsible for shaping the Homeric epic. The impact of Near Eastern influence on Greek culture probably resulted from multiple pathways and varying periods, with some even preceding the late Iron Age. According to Bachvarova (2016), the influence reached the Aegean region from Anatolia through earlier stages. She proposes that Hittite and ancient Near Eastern mythological and epic narratives were orally transmitted to early Greek epic during the close of the second millennium.

Abbreviations used

RINAP 1 H.Tadmor and S. Yamada 2011.

RINAP 5 J. Novotny and J. Joshua 2018.

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Chapter 14:
Ideological differences between representations of the pharaoh during the 18th and 19th Dynasties reflected on scarabs and stamp-seals

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Abstract. During all periods of Egyptian history, representations of the pharaoh were influenced and shaped by ideological notions. Portrayals of the Egyptian king appear on a grand scale on temple walls and stelae, and from the early New Kingdom they are also attested in miniature art on glyptic material, which formed an important vehicle for disseminating ideologies associated with the king. The aim of this paper is to point out differences between 18th and 19th Dynasty representations of the pharaoh on scarabs and stamp-seals of these periods, and to consider the concepts fomenting and forming these differences.

Keywords: Royal representations, New Kingdom scarabs, ideological differences.

We take pleasure in dedicating this paper to our friend and colleague Tallay Ornan, with whom we have often enjoyed deliberating topics of mutual interest.

Representations of the king on scarabs and stamp-seals of the 18th Dynasty

The earliest representations of the pharaoh in Egyptian glyptic art appear on 18th Dynasty scarabs and stamp-seals, which portray the king in conformity with the Egyptian artistic conventions as the glorified divine ruler. Portrayals of the king on scarabs are rarely attested before the reign of Thutmose III, with only a few examples bearing the throne name of Thutmose I (Newberry 1906: pl. 27: 4; Jaeger 1982: §1204, Ill. 475), and a few items bearing the throne name of Amenhotep I (Petrie, 1889: 819–820; Wiese 1990: 4–5, fig. 9), the latter most likely reissues (Jaeger 1982: 321, no. 590; Wiese 1990: 5). This is supported by the large assemblage of scarabs and stamp-seals from the foundation deposits of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el-Bahri, which illustrates the stylistic profile of early 18th Dynasty glyptic material predating the reign of Thutmose III. The Deir el-Bahri assemblage displays on the one hand inspiration from earlier models, and on the other hand the increasing popularity of royal names and titles (Ben-Tor 2015). Representations of the king are however completely absent on these pieces. A similar stylistic profile, although including some earlier and later material, is represented by the scarabs and stamp-seals from the Hathor temple at Gebel el-Zeit (Régen and Soukiassian 2008: 131–314).[1]

Royal portrayals on 18th Dynasty scarabs and stamp-seals display the king's figure as the central theme in settings that exalt his prominence as a divine ruler. A popular scene (Figures 1-2) portrays the king enthroned in the solar barque like the sun-god during his daily celestial journey (Wiese 1990: 59–68; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 226; Anafa, no. 3). Most scarabs displaying the scene associate it with the throne name of Thutmose III, but examples of Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV are also known (Jaeger 1982: §402, §1212–1213; Wiese 1990: 59). This scene is not attested on later glyptic

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Figure 1. Representation of the king enthroned in the solar barque on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 226).

Figure 2. Representation of the king enthroned in the solar barque on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 1997a: Anafa, no.3).

[1] The only two items from the site portraying the figure of the king date to the reigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep III (Régen and Soukiassian 2008: nos. 11, 327).

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Figure 3. Representation of the king standing beside the epithet *tit imn* on a plaque of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAğul, no. 492 side B).

material. Another royal representation appearing exclusively on 18th Dynasty scarabs (Figure 3) displays the king standing beside the epithet *tit imn* "image of Amun," holding the *heqa* scepter in his left hand and occasionally an *ankh* in his right hand (Jaeger 1982: §1204–1205; Wiese 1990: 4, fig. 1; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAğul, no. 492 side B; Keel 2020: no. 554). Most examples bear the name of Thutmose III, but examples bearing the names of Thutmose I, Amenhotep II, and Thutmose IV are also known (Wiese 1990: 4).

Other glorifying representations of the king which are typical of 18th Dynasty scarabs portray him as a bull trampling an enemy (Figure 4. Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 3; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAğul, no. 222 = Ben-Tor 2016: 54, fig. 13), a horse (Figure 5. Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 5), a griffin (Figure 6. Tufnell 1958: pls. 37/38, no. 317 side A), or a sphinx (Figure 7. Hornung and Staehelin 1976, nos. 338, 339; Jaeger 1982: fig. 167; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAğul, no. 266 side B, no. 492, side A; Keel 2013: Geser 556 = Ben-Tor 2016: 54, fig. 12).[2] Representations of the king as a reclining sphinx (Figures 8-9) comprising the central motif, usually with the king's throne name, are also popular on scarabs of the 18th Dynasty (Jaeger 1982: §1185–1186, types a–b, fig. 228; IMJ 76.31.2000; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAğul, nos. 240, 847 side A; Keel 2013: Geser, no. 609, side A).

Another 18th Dynasty representation of the king on scarabs, though not exclusive to this period, portrays him in the form of his classifying hieroglyph (Gardiner's sign-list A41–A46: Gardiner 1957: 446), which generally represents anthropomorphic deities (A40): a squatting position with bent knees, the feet drawn back toward the body which is tightly wrapped. Occasionally there is an attribute above the king's bent knees. The figure is depicted in association with the king's throne name

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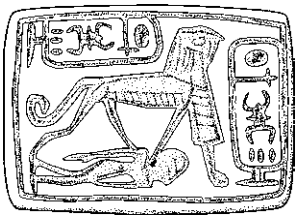

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Figure 4. Representation of the king as a bull on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 2016: 54, fig. 13. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Elie Posner).

Figure 5. Representation of the king as a horse on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 5. Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 76.31.2147. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Sara Kopelman).

Figure 6. Representation of the king as a griffin on a plaque of the 18th Dynasty (after Tufnell 1958: pls. 37/38, no. 317 side A).

Figure 7. Representation of the king as a sphinx on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 2016: 54, fig. 12. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Elie Posner).

Figure 8. Representation of the king as a reclining sphinx on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 76.31.2000. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Sara Kopelman).

Figure 9. Representation of the king as a reclining sphinx on a plaque of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 2013: Geser, no. 609, side A).

enclosed in a cartouche or an oval ring (Figure 10. Matouk 1971: 210, no. 306; Wiese 1990: 52–54, types 1–3). Considering the conventional use of this classifying hieroglyph to represent gods, Wiese has suggested that this representation emphasizes the association of the king with the divine sphere (1990: 55–57). He further compared it with the popular representation of the

[2] Portrayal of the king as a sphinx trampling an enemy appears also, though rarely, with the throne name Ramesses II (Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 856).

king in the company of gods on 19th Dynasty scarabs (see below). Representations of the king in the company of gods are however rare on scarabs and stamp-seals of the 18th Dynasty, with only a few examples depicting the king in the company of triads of the great state gods (Figure 11: Tufnell 1958: pls. 37/38, no. 317 side B; Jaeger 1982: §1242; Wiese 1990: 105–106). These include the Theban triad of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu, and the triad of the gods Amun, Ptah, and Re, which Wiese has considered in this context as "imperial triads," and the king as taking part in the divine dominion of the world (Wiese 1990: 109–110).

Other representations of the king on 18th Dynasty scarabs portray him standing, facing his throne name which is sometimes enclosed in a cartouche. The king holds the standard royal regalia (Figures 12-13) – the *heqa* scepter and flagellum, or occasionally the *heqa* scepter and an *ankh* (Jaeger 1982: 171, no. 9 and no. 621; Wiese 1990: 4–5, types 2–6; IMJ 76.30.1763; Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 110; Keel 2013: Geser, no. 635). The throne name of Thutmose III is the most frequently attested on the 18th Dynasty examples of this representation, but it appears also with the names of Amenhotep II, Thutmose IV, and Amenhotep III (Wiese 1990: 4). This representation is not exclusive to scarabs of the 18th Dynasty and appears also on Ramesside scarabs (Wiese 1990: 4–6).

Representations of the king as a victorious warrior or a triumphant hunter are of great popularity on scarabs of the New Kingdom, especially during the Ramesside period (see below). Such representations on 18th Dynasty scarabs include portrayals of the king wearing the blue crown, standing, and drawing his bow ready to shoot (Figure 14). No enemy is included in the scene (Petrie 1925, nos. 994, 1421; Hornung and Staehelin 1976, nos. 303, 345; Keel 2017: Jericho, no. 35; Keel 2020: no. 470). A similar scene shows the king drawing his bow while seated on a throne (Figure 15. Keel 1990: 59, fig. 35), sometimes with a lion or an enemy as a target (Schroer 2011: no. 593; Keel 2020: no. 473). A portrayal of Amenhotep II drawing his bow in his chariot against enemies appears on one side of a rectangular plaque, the other side depicting him grabbing a lion by the tail in his left hand, his right hand raised holding a mace (Schroer 2011: no. 591). A unique scene on a scarab from Tell el-ʿAjjul portrays the king seated above the nine bows (Figure 16) that conventionally symbolize the enemies of Egypt (Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 430). The king, who is identified by his throne name as Thutmose III, is portrayed with a finger in his mouth characterizing him as a child, thus attributing to him the divine powers of a conqueror since birth (Wiese 1990: 131–32). Representations of the king in his chariot are extremely rare on 18th Dynasty scarabs (Wiese 1990: 81–85); with only a few exceptions, most examples bearing throne names of 18th Dynasty rulers

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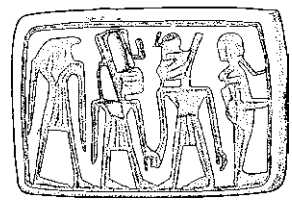
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Figure 10. Representation of the king in the form of his classifying hieroglyph on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Matouk 1971: 210, no. 306).

Figure 11. Representation of the king in the company of gods on a plaque of the 18th Dynasty (after Tufnell 1958: pls. 37/38, no. 317 side B).

Figure 12. Representation of the standing king facing his throne name with royal regalia on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 76.30.1763. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Sara Kopelman).

Figure 13. Representation of the standing king facing his throne name with royal regalia on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 2013: Geser, no. 635).

Figure 14. Representation of the standing king as a victorious warrior on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 470).

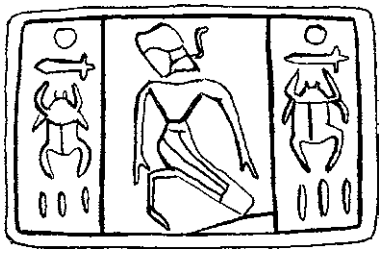
Figure 15. Representation of the enthroned king as a victorious hunter on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 473).

Figure 16. Representation of the seated king as a victorious warrior on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 430).

display features indicating their production in the 19th Dynasty (Jaeger 1982: §404, §1342–1344, figs. 271–273). This is also true for the conventional scene portraying the king smiting an enemy, which is typical of 19th Dynasty scarabs, but only isolated examples can be dated to the 18th Dynasty (Jaeger 1982: §1211, §1326–1327).

Portrayals of the kneeling king as a central motif (Figure 17), occasionally identified by a throne name but frequently showing an anonymous king, commonly appear on scarabs of the New Kingdom (Wiese 1990: 41–45). The earliest known examples bear the names of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II (Jaeger 1982: §389, §1014, ill. 298; Wiese 1990: 42; Keel 2013: Geser, no. 606, side A); some of the examples portraying an anonymous king were also assigned to these kings (Wiese 1990: 42–44, figs. 69, 71). It has been suggested that portrayals of the kneeling king on scarabs and stamp-seals were inspired by scenes depicted on temple walls, which symbolically represent the king's coronation (Wiese 1990: 46, no. 14, pl. III:1). These scenes do not necessarily refer to actual coronation ceremonies but more likely symbolize the king's legitimacy and the power granted to him by the gods (Wiese 1990: 46–47). The coronation scenes mythically symbolize the re-creation of the world, and the king's restoration of the original world order embodied in the goddess Ma'at (Wiese 1990: 47). This is clearly reflected in representations of the king offering the image of Ma'at, which frequently appear on 19th Dynasty temple decorations (Schroer 2011: nos. 697, 720) and on scarabs of that period (see below). Yet, a few examples appear on scarabs bearing the name of Thutmose III (Figure 18), which most likely date from his reign (Jaeger 1982: §365, ill. 185; Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 8).

The 18th Dynasty representations of the king discussed above portray his image as the central theme in settings that emphasize his prominence as the invincible divine ruler. This trend goes with other royal-associated innovations of 18th Dynasty scarabs and stamp-seals, among them the emphasis on royal names and titles. Unlike royal-name scarabs of previous periods, which constitute a small percentage among a majority of design scarabs, the proportion is reversed on scarabs of the early 18th Dynasty, gaining in popularity throughout the New Kingdom. These innovations reflect the new cultural context of New Kingdom scarabs as symbols of the glory of imperial Egypt, and the singular position of the king in this context. This explains the initial mass production of the king's glorifying representations during the reign of Thutmose III, the king who established the great Egyptian empire, which spread from Syria to southern Nubia. The focus on the eminent distinction of the pharaoh on 18th Dynasty scarabs and stamp-seals suggests their most likely production in workshops



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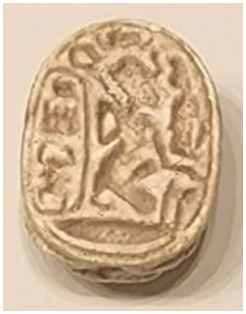

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Figure 17. Representation of the kneeling king on a plaque of the 18th Dynasty (after Keel 2013: Geser, no. 606, side A).

Figure 18. Representation of the kneeling king on a scarab of the 18th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 8. Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 76.31.1984. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Nir Orlev).

associated with the court. This is supported by the examples found in the southern Levant, which include many items bearing royal names as well as royal images, and most likely reflect Egyptian royal propaganda in the region (Ben-Tor 2016: 53–54, figs. 12–13). The initial large-scale importation of 18th Dynasty scarabs in the Levant took place subsequent to the establishing of the Egyptian empire by Thutmose III, and most likely reflects this political development (Ben-Tor 2011: 203–204). Keel has proposed that the large number of 18th Dynasty scarabs displaying names and images of the king imply their use not only for magical protection but also as tools of political propaganda both in Egypt and in the regions under Egyptian control (Ben-Tor 2011: no. 24).

Representations of the king on scarabs and stamp-seals of the 19th Dynasty

Representations of the pharaoh on scarabs and stamp-seals gained in popularity during the 19th Dynasty, when they increased in number as well as in the diversity of associated scenes. One of the most distinctive traits of royal representations in 19th Dynasty glyptic is their clear inspiration from scenes appearing on temple walls of the period. The external temple walls of the Ramesside period frequently portray the king as the protector of world order against the threatening forces of chaos illustrated in human as well as in animal form. The king is thus portrayed

in battle against the traditional enemies bordering the land of Egypt, or as a hunter of wild animals (Pritchard 1954: nos. 327–330; Keel 1997b: 300–301, fig. 405a).

One such scene shows the king striking an enemy with a scimitar, while facing a god who presents to him another scimitar (Figures 19-20. Hayes 1959: 345, fig. 217 bottom row second from the right; Matouk 1971: 217, no. 652; Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 1234; Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 23). Conventional representations of the pharaoh receiving the scimitar from a god symbolize the ceremonial transfer of the sword of victory to the king to warrant his triumph in military campaigns. This symbolic act was usually entrusted to the god Amun-Re, head of the pantheon at the time (Schroer 2011: nos. 600–602, 604), but occasionally to other divine guardians of the king like the war god Montu, the god Re-Horakhty, the god Horus, and the god Seth (Schroer 2011: no. 603; Ben-Tor 2023: 25–26). Such scenes appear during the Ramesside period on monumental as well as on glyptic art (Schroer 2011: nos. 599–605; Ben-Tor 2023).

Another scene inspired by temple decorations of the Ramesside period depicts one or two trumpet blowers facing the enthroned king (Figure 21. Wiese 1990: 100, figs. 126–127; Schroer 2011: no. 606 = Matouk 1977: 400, no. 1568), sometimes appearing together with fan bearers bowing before the king (Wiese 1990: 100, fig. 125). The trumpet blowers depicted on temple walls signify preparations for military campaigns as well as triumphs of victorious campaigns, and they salute the appearance of the king before his officials and his troops (Wiese 1990: 100–101). Scenes portraying the king in his chariot frequently appear on scarabs of the Ramesside period (Figures 22-23), especially during the reign of Ramesses II (Jaeger 1982: §1341–§1345; Wiese 1990: 81–85; Schroer 2011: nos. 608–612). The almost complete absence of chariot scenes on scarabs of the 18th Dynasty suggests that the popularity of these scenes on 19th Dynasty scarabs was inspired by the frequent appearance of such scenes on temple walls of this period (Wiese 1990: 84–86). Chariot scenes appear on temple walls since the reign of Seti I and continue throughout the Ramesside period, reflecting the unprecedented number of military campaigns conducted during this period as a result of political instability in the regions under Egyptian control and the regions bordering the Egyptian empire (Wiese 1990: 85–86; Spalinger 2005: 187–234). The chariot scenes depicted on 19th Dynasty scarabs portray the king in different stages of military campaigns, from harnessing and preparing the horse before battle, the trampling of the enemy during battle, and the victorious parade over the defeated enemy (Schroer 2011: nos. 608–611). The king is always depicted wearing the blue crown, which typically appears in war-associated scenes. He holds the reins with both hands, with one hand occasionally holding a whip or a bow, and the scene always includes a single horse whose head is adorned with feathers (Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 302 = Ben-Tor 2016: 68, fig. 15; Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, no. 712; Keel 2020: nos. 475-477).

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Figure 19. Representation of the king striking an enemy with a scimitar on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift 1926: 26.7.230).

Figure 20. Representation of the king striking an enemy with a scimitar on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 23).

Figure 21. Representation of the enthroned king facing trumpet blowers on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Schroer 2011: no. 606 = Matouk 1977: 400, no. 1568).

Figure 22. Representation of the king in his chariot on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 2016: 68, fig. 15. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Elie Posner).

Figure 23. Representation of the king in his chariot on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, no. 712).

Another popular royal presentation on scarabs of the 19th Dynasty, in particular during the reign of Ramesses II, is the conventional symbolic scene of the king smiting an enemy (Figures 24-26). The scene, which is first attested, though rarely, on scarabs of the 18th Dynasty (see above), becomes almost a trademark of royal representations on 19th Dynasty scarabs (Ben–Tor 1989: 48, no. 2; Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 47; Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 566; Keel 2020: nos. 479–480, 482–484),[3] with variations showing the king accompanied by a lion, or officiating before a god (Jaeger 1982: §1326–§1335; Schroer 2011: no. 716). The scene is a symbolic miniature presentation of temple decorations of the period frequently showing the victorious pharaoh smiting his defeated foes in scenes referring to actual battles (Schroer 2011: nos. 613–614, 619).

Scarabs of this period also portray the enthroned king with one or more officials bowing before him in reverence (Figure 27). Such scenes are not attested on scarabs before the reign of Ramesses II,[4] and they frequently appear on scarabs bearing this king's throne name (Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 6; Wiese 1990: 89–100). Wiese has suggested that the scenes showing the king receiving adoring audiences associate him with the divine sphere, and that these scarabs were used as mass media propagating this facet (Wiese 1990: 97–98).[5] An example showing the presentation of bound prisoners before the king (Wiese 1990: 93, fig. 119), was equated with temple scenes portraying the king presenting war prisoners before the gods (Wiese 1990: 98). The deified position of the king in these scenes is also suggested by a scarab showing a worshipper offering the king loaves of bread, similar to scenes showing the king presenting such offerings to the gods (Wiese 1990: 95, fig. 122; Keel 2006: figs. 49–51), and by a scarab showing a falcon-headed figure in adoration before the king (Wiese 1990: 95, fig. 123). Wiese has associated the adoration scenes before the king with the popular practice of personal piety towards the gods during the Ramesside period, and suggested a parallel perception of the king with that of the great state gods at that time (Wiese 1990: 99–100).

This is supported by the standard portrayals of the king in the company of these gods as featured in the "god-king-god" composition typical of scarabs of the period (Figures 28-31), with most examples dating from the reign of Ramesses II (Wiese 1990: 106–107, 111–114). This composition depicts the king standing

Figure 24. Representation of the king smiting a bound enemy on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Ben–Tor 1989: 48, no. 2. Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 76.31.4175. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Sara Kopelman).

Figure 25. Representation of the king smiting an enemy on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, nos. 566).

Figure 26. Representation of the king smiting a bound enemy on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 47).

Figure 27. Representation of the enthroned king with officials bowing before him in reverence on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 1989: 48, no. 6. Collection of The Israel Museum Jerusalem, 76.31.1969. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Sara Kopelman).

Figure 28. Representation of the king in the company of the gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Tufnell 1958: pls. 39–40, no. 365).

Figure 29. Representation of the king in the company of the gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 475).

Figure 30. Representation of the king in the company of the gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 567).

Figure 31. Representation of the king in the company of the gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 467).

[3] This includes examples bearing the throne name of Thutmose III, which are dated to the 19th Dynasty based on their stylistic profile (Jaeger 1982: §1332–§1335).

[4] Items bearing the throne name of Thutmose III display characteristics that clearly date them to the Ramesside period (Wiese 1990: 93–94).

[5] See also Schroer 2011: no. 643.

between two gods and holding hands with them, most frequently with Amun and Re, but occasionally between two falcon-headed gods (Tufnell 1958: pls. 39–40, no. 365; Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, nos. 475, 567; Keel 2020: no. 467), and there are examples showing the king between Amun and Thot, Ptah and Thot, and Horus and Seth (Wiese 1990: 106, 111, fig. 137). The god-king-god composition, attested in Egyptian sculpture since the Old Kingdom, gained in popularity during the New Kingdom particularly in the reign of Ramesses II when it became standard temple iconography especially in Nubia and probably also in the eastern Delta (Wiese 1990: 111–12). The deification of the king in this composition is substantiated by a small votive group portraying Ramesses II between the gods Amun-Re and Re-Horakhty in high relief, showing the king crowned by a sun disk, with an inscription on the back referring to the king as "the great sun of Egypt" (Wildung 1972).[6] The frequent appearance of a sun disk above the king's head in the god-king-god compositions on scarabs of Ramesses II suggests a similar perception (Wiese 1990: 113–14).

Scarabs and stamp-seals of the 19th Dynasty, mostly from the reign of Ramesses II, frequently feature the king in cultic interactions with the great state gods (Figures 32-39). These include scenes showing the king in adoration before a god (cf. Figures 32-34. Keel 2010a: Der el-Balah, no. 73; Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, nos. 564, 565, 781 = Ben-Tor 2016: 68, fig. 16; Schroer 2011: nos. 713, 722), smiting an enemy in his presence (cf. Figure 35. Schroer 2011: no. 716; MMA 26.7.221), or presenting various types of offerings like loaves of bread, wine, or the image of the goddess Maat (cf. Figures 36-39. Keel 1997a: Tell el-ʿAǧul, no. 272, Side A; Keel 2006: figs 49–51; Keel 2010a: Der el-Balah, nos. 25, 135; Schroer 2011: nos. 719, 721; Keel 2020: nos. 487, 489). With the exception of the adoration scenes, these representations are miniature versions of temple decorations of this period (Keel 2006: 255–56; Schroer 2011: nos. 718–722). Scarabs of this period occasionally also show the king facing one of the great state gods (Figures 40-41)– Amun, Re, or Ptah, while grasping the scepter held by the god (Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, nos. 551, 570; Keel 2013: Geser, no. 100, side A; Keel 2020: no. 496). This king-god interaction does not appear on temple walls, yet its appearance on scarabs of this period may imply the king's participation in these gods' power over the world (Keel 2006: 256–58, figs. 64–66). This is further suggested by the popularity of particular scarabs of this period, implying the equation of the king with the god Amun-Re, in their almost identical representation as reclining sphinxes (Figures 42-45). The king is portrayed with a human head and the royal beard,

Figure 32. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Farʿa Süd, no. 564).

Figure 33. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el- Farʿa Süd, no. 565).

Figure 34. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Ben-Tor 2016: 68, fig. 16. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Elie Posner).

Figure 35. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift 1926: 26.7.221).

Figure 36. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010a: Der el-Balah, no. 25).

Figure 37. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010a: Der el-Balah, no.135).

Figure 38. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 487).

Figure 39. Representation of the king in cultic interactions with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 489).

[6] The object is in the collection of the archaeological museum Château Borély in Marseille, no. 1089.

wearing the double crown, while the god is depicted as a ram-headed sphinx wearing the *atef* crown. The composition of both designs is identical: the figures are equally protected by a winged *uraeus* behind them, and a divine figure at their front. The only difference is the figure of Re appearing before the Amun sphinx, while the figure of Maat appears before the royal sphinx (Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, nos. 571, 572, 574, 576). Such an equation between Amun and the king is also implied in scenes portraying Amun between two falcon-headed gods, holding hands with them (Figures 46-47. Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 112; Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 568), in a composition identical to that portraying the king (see above).

The 19th Dynasty representations discussed above frequently portray the king in the company of gods, and regularly show inspiration from temple decorations of this period. The gods most commonly depicted in association with the king are the great state gods Amun, Re, and Ptah. Other gods such as Sekhmet (the consort of Ptah), Thoth, and Seth (patron of the capital Piramesses), appear as well (Ben-Tor 1989: 73, nos. 4–5; 74, nos. 9–10; 75, nos. 24–26; Wiese 1990: 107–116). The inspiration from temple wall decorations on many of the representations described above argues for their most likely production in temple-associated workshops. Evidence for the existence of such workshops was found by Petrie in the 19th Dynasty court of the temple of Ptah at Memphis, where many unfinished items were discovered (Petrie 1909: pl. 28: 14). Keel has pointed out the popularity of portrayals of Ptah on glyptic material of the 19th Dynasty, where the god is shown as the object of veneration by the king as well as by other gods (Keel 2006: 252–262, figs. 34–70). These representations point to a workshop associated with the temple of Ptah at Memphis being the most likely place for their production. The prevalence of the name and image of Amun-Re, head of the pantheon, on scarabs and stamp-seals of the 19th Dynasty, suggests the existence of a scarab workshop associated with his elaborate temples at Thebes. This is supported by the inspiration of Theban temple decorations on many examples of the glyptic material described above (Spalinger 2005: 194–196, figs. 12.1–12.2, 223, fig. 13.6b).

Like the imported scarabs of the 18th Dynasty in the southern Levant, the imported scarabs from the 19th Dynasty reflect political developments in Egyptian-Levantine relations. Egyptian textual sources of the period describe a considerable number of military campaigns to the Levant in reaction to the growing power of the Hittites in the north and to local unrest among the Canaanite city states (Morris 2005: 343–504). These circumstances intensified the Egyptian presence in the region and thereby increased the Egyptian cultural influence (Weinstein 1981: 17–22; Oren 1984; Martin 2011: 249–254; Ben-Tor 2011: 207–209; Ben-Tor

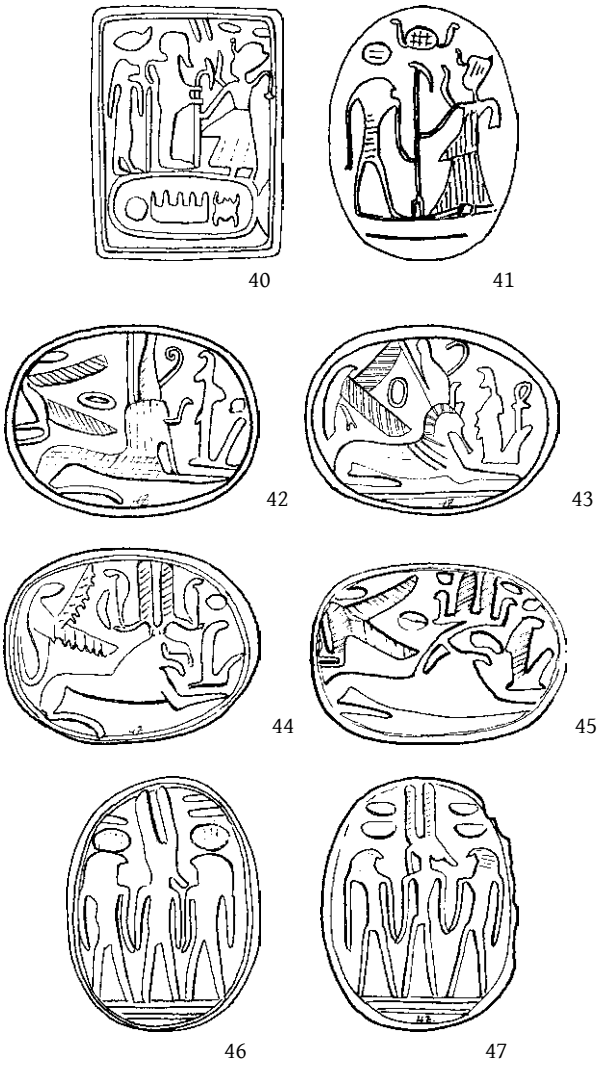

Figure 40. Representation of the king in cultic interaction with a god and his consort on a plaque of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2013: Geser, no. 100, side A).

Figure 41. Representation of the king in cultic interaction with a god on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2020: no. 496).

Figure 42. Representation of the king as a sphinx on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 571).

Figure 43. Representation of the king as a sphinx on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 572).

Figure 44. Representation of the god Amun-Re as a ram-headed sphinx on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 574).

Figure 45. Representation of the god Amun-Re as a ram-headed sphinx on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 576).

Figure 46. Representation of the god Amun-Re between two falcon-headed gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010a: Bet-Schean, no. 112).

Figure 47. Representation of the god Amun-Re between two falcon- headed gods on a scarab of the 19th Dynasty (after Keel 2010b: Tell el-Far'a Süd, no. 568).

2016: 67–84). The 19th-Dynasty scarabs in the southern Levant constitute the largest group of imported Late Bronze Age glyptic finds in the region (Ben-Tor 2011: 207). These scarabs were found in the Egyptian strongholds, as well as in local cemeteries, indicating their use by the Egyptians stationed in the area as well as by the local population. The Egyptian origin of these 19th Dynasty scarabs is indicated by their inscriptions and decorating motifs (Ben-Tor 2017), while the quality of workmanship of many examples suggests their production in both royal and temple workshops.

The difference between royal representations of the 18th and 19th Dynasties

The royal representations discussed above indicate that both 18th and 19th Dynasty glyptic material portrays the king in accordance with Egyptian artistic conventions as the glorified divine ruler. Some representations appear during both periods, yet there are differences which most likely reflect political and religious developments in Egypt during this time span. The 18th Dynasty representations generally portray the king as the dominant motif in contexts that exalt his unique prominent prestige. As noted above, the advent of these portrayals subsequent to the founding of the empire by Thutmose III, most likely signifies the new cultural context of scarabs as symbols of the glory of imperial Egypt, and the singular position of the king in this context. The great popularity of royal names and images on 18th Dynasty scarabs and stamp-seals argues for the production of these pieces in workshops associated with the court. As shown above, images of gods are quite rare on scarabs and stamp-seals of this period, the few exceptions rendering the figures of the great state gods Amun and Ptah, and the war god Montu (Keel 2006: 249, figs. 22–30; Schroer 2011: nos. 658–659). The figure of Ptah is the most frequently attested, occasionally in association with a royal name or image (Keel 2006: 249–250, figs. 22–23, 27–30), possibly implying the existence of the workshop associated with the god's temple at Memphi s already in the 18th Dynasty. Unlike images of gods, names of gods frequently appear on 18th Dynasty scarabs, in particular the name of Amun-Re (Ben-Tor 2015). The popularity of the name of Amun-Re, which is demonstrated already on the scarabs from Hatshepsut's foundation deposits at Deir el-Bahri, is undoubtedly associated with the location of the royal scarab workshop in Thebes at that time (Ben-Tor 2015: 141).

Unlike the 18th Dynasty glyptic material, scarabs and stamp-seals of the 19th Dynasty frequently portray the king in the company of gods, while displaying miniature copies of scenes appearing on temple wall reliefs. Such scenes show the king in adoration before the gods, presenting various types of offerings to them, leading military campaigns under their protection, and smiting enemies in their presence. These representations strongly argue for the widespread production of glyptic material of this period in temple-associated workshops. The close relations between the king and the gods is exemplified on the one hand by the equation of the king with the great state gods, while on the other hand, the miniature copies of temple reliefs of this period suggest the increasing dependence of the king on divine protection. This is most likely the result of the political instability in the regions under Egyptian control and the border regions, which forced the king to conduct challenging military campaigns. The frequent appearance of military-associated scenes on temple walls and on scarabs and stamp-seals of the 19th Dynasty, especially during the reign of Ramesses II, most likely reflects the political reality of this period and the king's appeal to divine support.

Considering the evidence presented above, it can be concluded that royal portrayals appearing on New Kingdom glyptic material reflect changes in Egypt's political circumstances between the 18th and 19th Dynasties. While portrayals of the king on 18th Dynasty scarabs disclose confidence in the supreme power of the sovereign of the great Egyptian empire, the 19th Dynasty representations reflect political instability which generated on the one hand a correspondence of the king with the great state gods, while on the other hand emphasizing his appeal to these gods for protection.

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Chapter 15:
In a masked world:
On the physiognomy of Assyrian faces

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"There are some people whose faces bear the stamp of such artless vulgarity and baseness of character, such an animal limitation of intelligence, that one wonders how they can appear in public with such a countenance, instead of wearing a mask"
(Schopenhauer, quoted in Hassin and Trope 2000: 63).

For Tallay, in admiration for the perspectives she opens and the bridges she builds in ancient Near Eastern visual culture studies.

Abstract. Is there any possibility to read from or into faces depicted in Neo-Assyrian art? By examining the facial physiognomics in Neo-Assyrian monumental art, the present article discusses the scope and limits of physiognomy as scientific approach in visual object analysis.

The Assyrian case – the Assyrian face – is distinct in its visual impact. It bears the same physiognomic appearance for more than three centuries. The uniformity of faces carved in relief or as sculptures in the round demonstrates a constructed reality, which hides individual identities. Therefore, the relation between the face and its mask will be another central aspect to think about apropos the importance of physiognomy in Neo-Assyrian monumental art.

Keywords: Physiognomy, faces, masks, Assyria, visual art.

Physiognomics are an issue seldom addressed in ancient Near Eastern archaeology. Certain works, of course, tackle aspects of body language in visual arts (e.g. Winter 1989 and 1996; Nunn 2011), but these are not explicit in the use of physiognomy as a direction of research.[1] The skepticism of many scholars obviously roots in the long-applied, misleading use of physiognomic traits to identify and demarcate personal characters and human races. Such approaches were prevalent in ancient Greek philosophy and revived with the studies of Johan Caspar Lavater in the 18th century. His work *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, published between 1775 and 1778, paved the way for a long series of academic and artistic perceptions, which were stimulated by the idea that the human temperament can be studied through comparative observations on face, head, and body forms. In the mid 19th century, Cesare Lambroso spearheaded the use of physiognomy in the field of criminology, arguing that the "born criminal" could be determined by physical characteristics (Mazzarello 2011). By the end of the same century, Carl Huter propagated psycho-physiognomics as the primary science, arguing that all real knowledge could be perceived only through the outward appearance of things because the inward could not be viewed (Kupfer 1963). Although the approaches of Lavater, Lambroso, and Huter were soon criticized as pseudoscience, some scientists of the early 20th century still made use of physiognomy in combination with phrenology for their racist theories. Ancient Near East ern studies did not remain untouched by this development. Racial distinctions between Sumerians and Semites were quite often based on physiognomic interpretations of facial traits in visual art; for example, Bruno Meissner described the Sumerians as a "short-necked nation with fleshy nose" in contrast to the Semites (Akkadians), recognized by a "high forehead and Semitic nose" (Meissner 1915: 24, 39).

It is understandable that such a problematic past led to a rejecting attitude toward physiognomics (Lindauer 2013: 2). As Ingrid Weigel puts it in an article on the face as artefact, the interest of image studies ought to be on "views of the face beyond the beaten paths of physiognomy" (Weigel 2012: 6). However, it cannot be ignored that the physiognomy of the human body and the face in particular have a strong influence on our perception. Whether a self-portrait by Rembrandt or the

[1] Unlike in Ancient Near Eastern textual studies, which started early to develop a research interest in Mesopotamian physiognomic omens (Kraus 1935 and see the final chapter of this article).

face of someone who draws our attention in daily life, we are always tempted to read outward appearance as a sign of inner psychological states. Concerning art and especially the important role that faces play within it, it is a commonplace that it does not "work" if it lacks physiognomic impact (Lindauer 2013: 46). Therefore, the close link between physiognomy and psychology cannot be completely disregarded, either. The effective properties of physiognomics cause emotions and feelings in the eye of the beholder. Physiognomy therefore begins with physique, outwards signs, but goes beyond the literal description to tease out temperament, sociability, personality, intelligence, and so on (Lindauer 2013: 10).

Focusing on ancient Near Eastern visual art, it is obviously a critical task to investigate the psychological implications of facial physiognomics. It is impossible to discern the "real" self from a human face carved thousands of years ago and, in general, it would be an illusion to assume that any image was carved to reveal a psychological state in the first place. Yet, many images from the ancient Near East have portrait-like features and distinct physiognomic traits that make them distinguishable over time and space. One of the most remarkable faces in this respect is the Assyrian one, which is easily recognizable to everyone familiar with ancient Near Eastern visual art.

Faces are not a random aspect in Neo-Assyrian monumental art. There are hundreds or even thousands sculpted in relief and in statuary. They all bear very similar characteristics and keep them for a long period from the middle of the 9th to the end of the 7th century BCE. The unabated convention in the depiction of Assyrian faces sets them distinctly apart from being perceived as individual portraits. So from an art anthropological perspective, the question is the meaning of the uniformity of a strong physiognomy in a society that can justly be called imperial. In addition, the question from an art historical and aesthetic perspective is the creation of physiognomic uniformity as a means to convey a certain message and to communicate with different types of audiences. The two questions overlap, and it is therefore not useful to deal with them separately. I will try to follow them up, starting with a formal descriptive and comparative approach and ending with an analytic approach that contextualizes the images in space and time. Before that, however, let me briefly define what a face means when depicted in art.

What is a face in art?

In reality, no one looks like his or her portrait. The image that creates a portrait always hides the original face behind a mask that presents a frozen moment of constructed personality and reality. The face in art is not the true face because it does not change its expression from one second to the other. Ernst Gombrich devoted one of his most influential studies to the close relation between face and mask in art, asking about the physiognomic perception of the face in life and in art (Gombrich 1972). The intrinsic mask aspect of every face represented in visual art is reviewed in detail in Hans Belting's book *Faces. Eine Geschichte des Gesichts* (2014). For him, portraits necessarily transform the face into a mask, which always keeps a distance from the true face, because it is a substitute for the face (Belting 2014: 28).

It is not possible to seek the physiognomic reality behind the faces depicted in Neo-Assyrian art because of their standardized homogeneity, which excludes any possibility of individual self-presentation. Their strong physiognomy (described below), however, forms a distinct mask, which, precisely in Belting's sense, served as a substitute for the many different faces in the Assyrian empire. From a cultural–anthropological as well as an art-historical point of view, the interesting phenomenon here is the uniform pictorial outward appearance of the Assyrians as they wanted themselves to be represented. What can we discern from such a masked reality?

Assyrian faces in a nutshell

In relief art, Assyrian faces are always depicted in profile. The artistic rendering follows a sharp outline that draws a short part of the forehead, interrupts with a bulge of the projecting eyebrow, and continues along the long and slightly convex nasal bridge, which terminates in the pronounced curved tip of the nose (Figure 1). For beardless figures, the slim lips subtly open toward the middle of the mouth and thus project from the profile as if kissing (Figure 1c–d). The rounded jawline ends in a short fleshy lower jaw, which can be separated from the neck by a thin wrinkle. For bearded figures, only the rim of the upper lip and the lower lip are visible. The rest of the lower face is covered by the mustache and the long curled beard (Figure 1a–b, e–f).

For both characters, the bearded and the beardless Assyrians, the sharp profile leads to a clear separation of the two sides of the face. The depicted side is treated as a unit. Violating anatomical correctness, the eye and the eyebrow are rendered frontally making them a very ostentatious element of the portrait. The large leaf-shaped eye is framed by a thick lid, which sharply points to the outer corner of the eye and forms a loop in the corner attached to the nose. The horizontal pupil follows the leaf-shape of the eye and distinctly bulges from the ground.[2] This bold appearance of the eye is reinforced by the thick and sharply drawn eyebrow that curves from

[2] Assyrian reliefs were originally painted, so the impression made by the large painted eye and especially by the pupil might have been even stronger. Due to the lack of examples, however, further assumptions about painted facial expressions will not be made here.

Figure 1. Assyrian "faces", all from Nimrud/Kalhu, Northwest-Palace, ca. 865–860 BCE. From top left: a) king (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124549; b) crown prince (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124549; c) royal attendant (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 118928; d) royal attendant (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 118927; e) winged genius / *apkallu* (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from ANE 118876; f) king (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 118928. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

the outer corner of the orbital to the base of the nose. Regardless of whether the person is bearded or not, this particular stylistic rendering of the eye stands out as the overwhelming element of his or her facial expression.

Another striking element that underlines the strong relation between style and physiognomy in Neo-Assyrian visual art is the particular fleshy rendering of the volute nostril, which deeply cuts into the beefy cheek. With the nose, the eye, and the eyebrow in focus, the Assyrian face emerges like an ornament from the pictorial ground. It is clear that the artists who produced these images did not aim to achieve realistic portraits. Instead, they followed a strict convention that reproduced masks of faces, constructing a reality that in reality never existed. The hairstyle, the beard, and the headgear followed similar conventions, and they add to the distinct physiognomy of the faces. However, they also fulfilled an iconographic purpose since different styles of hair, beards, and headdresses served to indicate ranks and group affiliations. In contrast, the Assyrian face, in its basic ornamental concept, does not show any significant differences. It remains the same mask, from its first representation in the period of Ashurnasirpal II in the 9th century BCE to the period of Ashurbanipal in the middle of the 7th century BCE. And no distinction was made between faces of royals, commoners, and supernatural beings: they all shared the same physiognomic traits.

The same goes for the faces sculptured in the round (Figures 7–8), which look like opened versions of their relief counterparts or, *vice versa*, the faces in profile in relief art look like turned copies of their counterparts sculptured in the round. Examples of three-dimensional faces will be addressed at the end of this article. Before that, however, the uniformity of Assyrian faces in Neo-Assyrian art will be compared to the faces of non-Assyrians.

Assyrian faces vs. non-Assyrian faces

Considering that the faces of male Assyrians in Neo-Assyrian art represent an unchangeable icon of uniformity and constructed reality, the fact that non-Assyrians essentially show faces with the same physiognomic traits may look quite disappointing at first glance. From the comparison of Assyrian and non-Assyrian faces, it cannot be concluded that they served to distinguish between different identities. This distinction rather is a matter of different hair and beard styles and garments, which in Neo-Assyrian art characterize different ethnic groups (e.g. Figures 2–3; see also Wäfler 1975). However, in some instances, depictions of faces of non-Assyrians show an interest in expressions. For example, three prisoners from a campaign carried out by Ashurnasirpal II in northern Syria have the corners of their mouths allusively turned down, indicating grief (Figure 2). Such emotional expressions are quite rarely

Figure 2. Prisoners from a conquered city. From the Northwest-Palace in Nimrud/Kalhu, ca. 865–860 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124539. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 3. Two prisoners from Babylon are led by Assyrian soldiers. Detail from a carved wall panel from Nineveh, Southwest Palace, ca. 640–620 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124825. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 4. Dispute between Gambulean prisoners. Detail from a carved wall panel belonging to the Teumman cycle from the Southwest Palace in Nineveh, after 653 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124802. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

observed in Neo-Assyrian art (Bonatz 2017: 58; Wagner-Durand 2017: 86) and, in this case, they can be identified only by comparison with Assyrian faces, which show a decent smile. This does not mean that Assyrians were depicted smiling. The "smile " is an emblematic detail of the face-mask, which contributes to the physiognomic harmony of the face. This harmony becomes distorted only when faces of non-Assyrians needed to be shown with an expression of inferiority and despair.

In rare cases, special characters in the visual narrative are highlighted through "abnormal" physiognomic facial features. For instance, in the scenes recording the aftermath of the Battle of Til-Tuba, two nobles of the Gambuleans are forced to wear the heads of their former allies, Teumman and the king of Hidalu, around their necks (Figure 4). One of them opens his mouth as if to indicate that he is lamenting the torture he is undergoing. More intriguing is the figure right behind the two Assyrian soldiers accompanying this scene. He is distinctly smaller than the other figures and shows a shaved face with a strikingly different physiognomy. The nose with long curved bridge sharply points at the tip. The lips are rubbery and the mouth is open, which again is an expression completely absent from Assyrian faces. The nose indeed is similar to the hooked nose of Teumman, which is depicted quite prominently in the "Garden Scene" in which Teumman's severed head hangs from a tree[3] (Figure 5). It cannot be said with security that these distinct features in the physiognomy of special human characters were displayed to discriminate against them, but they make it clear that there were options to break with the conventions and to represent facial physiognomies that don't fit in the order.

Faces of Assyrian women

Assyrian women are very rarely depicted in Neo-Assyrian art because the interest was in non-Assyrian women who were regarded as booty and slaves from the conquered countries. The most notable rarity is the depiction of the Assyrian queen and her female entourage in Ashurbanipal's "Garden Scene". The enthroned queen (probably Liballi-Šarrat) and the six female attendants behind her, who all represent members of the household of the queen, have the same facial characteristics (Figure 5): a short forehead, a slightly convex nasal bridge with curved tip, and a curved chin that is separated from the neck only by a short lower jawline. They have the same frontally shown, leaf-shaped eye with bulging pupil, framed with the curved eyebrow on top of the orbital. The volute nostrils cut deep into the cheek, and the corner

[3] For another identification of the head hanging from a tree, see the chapter by Natalie Naomi May in this book, at the pages 313–330.

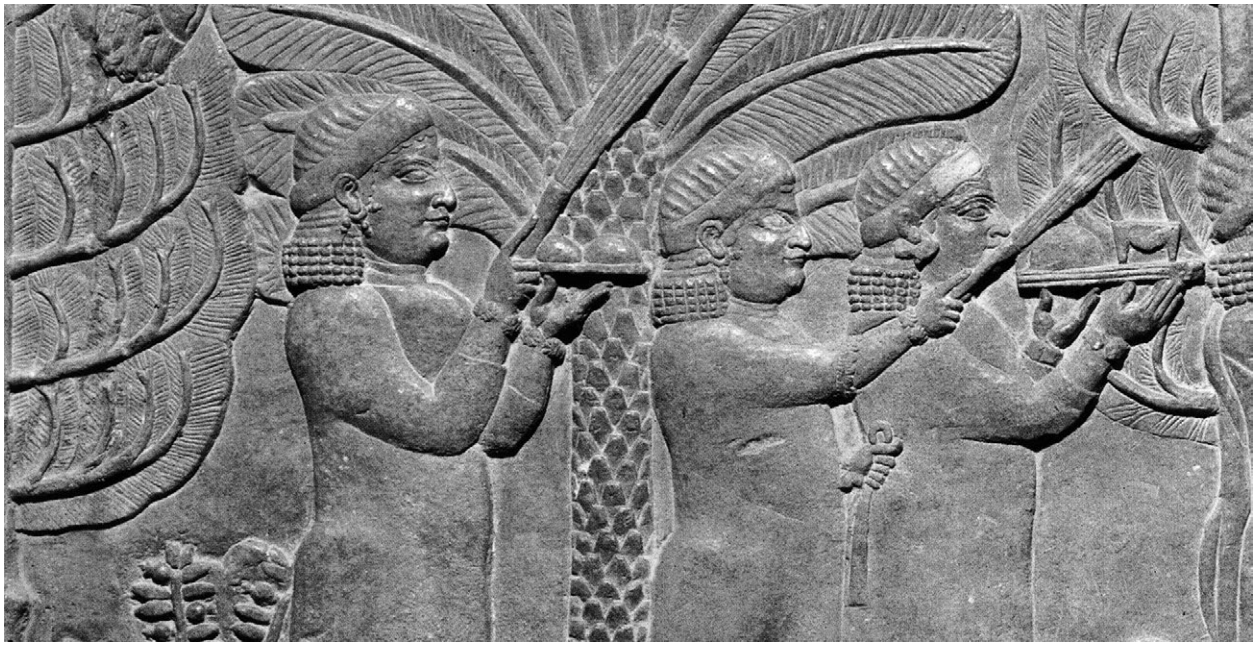

Figure 5. Detail from the "Garden Scene". Three female attendants behind the queen. In the tree hangs the severed head of the Elamite king Teumman. North Palace in Nineveh, ca. 645–640 BCE (photo: Sebastian Hageneuer), British Museum, detail from WA 124920. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

of the mouth tips slightly upward, which creates the expression of a smile (Figure 5). These facial physiognomic features are, however, essentially the same as for the beardless males (e.g. Figure 6). Hence, the faces of beardless male and female Assyrians can be easily confused.

Here is not the place to enter into a discussion of whether images of beardless male Assyrians represent eunuchs. If they do, as several scholars believe (N'Shea 2016: 214 with references), then it would be tempting to read the soft and fleshy look of the faces of beardless Assyrians as a sign of femininity. However, such a reading is most probably wrong. In the faces of bearded Assyrians, the impression of masculinity is created primarily by the imposing long beard. If the beard is removed from these faces or, more illuminating, if it is placed on the faces of the women, the same facial characteristics would be displayed by both sexes. The nose, the mouth, and the eyes of the women would take on the same severe expression as that of their male counterparts. In the masked reality of Assyrian faces, there is no distinction between female and male faces.

Figure 6. Head of an attendant. Detail from a carved wall panel belonging to the lion hunt cycle from the North Palace in Nineveh, ca. 640–620 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 124893. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

The physiognomy of Assyrian faces through space and time

Cuneiform texts prove that the Mesopotamia ns showed a strong interest in the physiognomy of faces and other parts of the body. They identified an ample

Figure 7. Head of a statue of Ashurnasirpal II (883–858 BCE), from the temple of Ishtar-belit-mati in Nimrud/Kalhu (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, detail from WA 118871. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 8. Head of winged lion *lamassu*, from the Northwest Palace in Nimrud/Kalhu, ca. 865–860 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, ME 118801. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

number of physiognomic omens and compiled them in lists, the most comprehensive of which was the handbook of physiognomic omens called *Alandimmû,* which was stored in several copies in Esarhaddon's and Ashurbanipal's libraries in Nineveh (Böck 2010). At the Assyrian court, specialized exorcists were trained in physiognomic treatises; and among diviners in general, it was common to perform physiognomic inspections (Böck 2010: 214–215). Usually, facial traits that were considered abnormal became a sign of a physiognomic omen, most of them with a negative prophecy, but a few indicating a favorable destiny. For example:

> "If the curl in his front points downwards: losses, he will become worried" (Alandimmû Tablet III line 63) vs. "If his right eye is long: he will become rich." (Tablet VIII line 69; Böck 2000: 92, 112; quoted from Böck 2010: 201).

If it therefore can be assumed that interpreting physiognomy was a common practice at least for the elite circle in Assyrian society, one may ask if its intellectual background also influenced the perception of the images. With the creation of a standardized Assyrian face in visual art, the typical physiognomic characteristics of the face might have been recognized as indicative of a certain personality and destiny that could have been perceived as an image of perfection. This assumption is indeed supported by further textual and pictorial evidence. Diviners and priests, for example, who were concerned with physiognomic inspections, were expected to be of perfect physical condition (Böck 2010: 218). Especially the king was attributed a perfect body, which demonstrated his extraordinary power, wisdom, and ability to rule (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 219–225). For example, the eye as a special facial characteristic is explicitly mentioned

Figure 9. Ashurbanipal and his crew in chariot. Detail from a carved wall panel belonging to the lion hunt cycle from the North Palace in Nineveh, ca. 640–620 BCE (photo: Simone Haack), British Museum, from WA 124854. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

in the royal self-appraisal in the Ashurbanipal colophon of the *Alandimmû* handbook:

> "Palace of Assurbanipal, king of the universe, king of the land of Assur, whom Nabû and Tašmetu bestowed with understanding and whom they granted bright eyes – the highest level of scribal art which no one of the kings preceding me had achieved in this discipline" (quoted in Böck 2010: 213).

Although the "bright eyes" of the king must not be taken literally in this text, an allusion to the large leaf-shaped eyes in the royal images is probable. In any case, the exaggerated ornamental and anatomically stylized form of the eyes and nose in the royal images contributes to the perfect physical appearance of the king. Furthermore, his face, depicted in profile (Figure 1f) or frontally (Figure 7), exactly matches the faces of the *apkallū* (Figure 1e) and *lamassū* (Figure 8); thus, it is connected to the sphere of wisdom and divinity. The fact that the same face persisted in the art of the empire for three centuries confirms its role as a physiognomic ideal. This observation, however, seems to contradict the statement that the perfect body of the king distinguished him from the rest of humankind and associated him with the divine world (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 220). In the pictorial reality of the palace sculptures, the face of the king rather stands as prototype for all the other faces in the Assyrian empire (Figure 9). The artistic emulation of both Assyrian and most non-Assyrian faces therefore aimed to create an ideal state of being in the world in the sense of being part of the Assyrian empire. Hence, the distinct physiognomy of the Assyrian face has to be understood as an emblem that masked any individual identity in order to present infinite beauty in the Assyrian state.

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Chapter 16:
The "Lady at the Window" from Arslan Tash

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Deh, vieni alla finestra
o mio tesoro...
Da Ponte, Mozart, *Don Giovanni* Act II

Abstract. Based on recent research on the corpus of ivory from Arslan Tash, this paper rejects the topos of the Lady in the window as a sacred harlot. The motif is rooted in Late Bronze Age Syria and Mycenaean Cyprus. At Ugarit, texts mention an "Athtart of the window" while the newly rebuilt temple of Baal includes a appearance window, a feature borrowed from Egypt where practices of displaying the royal couple were introduced in the Amarna period.

Keywords: ivory, lady in the window, Arslan Tash, Damascus, Hazael.

> "A woman usually wearing an Egyptian style wig and a frontlet on her forehead, looking frontally out of a window supported on small columns, such as existed in the women's quarter on the upper floor of a Phoenician palace. The allusion is to the cult of Ashtart, common in Cyprus and probably Phoenicia, in which she or her votaress figures as a sacred prostitute. It was probably bedecked in this guise that Jezebel looked out of her window to ensnare the returning captain Jehu by her wiles" (Barnett 1982: 48).

Barnett's view through Biblical sources,[1] durably shaped the understanding of the Lady at the Window motif (Figure 1) as "the representation of the goddess Ashtart (or Astarte) who, like her sacred harlots, lures passers-by from her window" (Pritchard 1969: 131; King and Stager 2001: 30). Later, however, the focus has changed. Suter explored the occurrences in the ivory finds from Samaria, Arslan Tash, Nimrud and Khorsabad, and remarked on the erotic connotation of the window motif that endured into modern times (Suter 1992; 2015). Rehm bids "adieu to the harlot *topos*," and places the motif in the general context of the apotropaic decoration on the furniture of Phoenician palaces (Rehm 2003). Winter would stress the power of the ornamented woman in frontal, open gaze; the importance of the balustraded window, hinting at an imagined interior; and the importance of comparison in the absence of governing texts, allowing for cross-temporal and cross-cultural dialogues (Winter 2016).

I propose to revisit the Lady at the Window from a technical point of view, based on the recent catalogue of the Arslan Tash ivories.[2] In that volume, examination of the debitage and attachment system, chemical analysis of the pigments, recent archaeological investigation of the site, and a new philological study of the signs and inscription (Amadasi Guzzo 2018), led to revised conclusions concerning the origin, date, technique and function of the corpus. Although found in a secondary context, like the Nimrud ivories, the assemblage appears fairly homogeneous, indicating a single origin. It is for the major part datable to the late 9th century BCE, a production of Damascus, connected to the historical king Haza'el (ca. 843–806 BCE).[3] It arrived at the provincial palace of Hadatu, modern Arslan Tash, as booty, probably following the Assyrian campaign against Damascus in 773 BCE. For reasons of space and time, our catalogue did not deal with iconographic issues, its first aim being to serve as a solid base for further studies.

Typology

Of the more than 100 surviving ivory panels of the Lady at the Window in Iron Age ivory art, 33 come from the

[1] It is my pleasure to dedicate the following observations to my colleague and friend of long standing, Tallay Ornan, distant relative of the Ugaritic goddess Taliy (see infra "Forerunners at Ugarit"). Many thanks to R.S. Merrillees, J. Mertens, J. Reade, N. Wyatt, and M. Yon, for sharing their thoughts.
Judges 5:28; Jer. 22:14; II Kings, 9:30 sqq. Barnett studied the motif in several seminal works: Barnett 1935; Barnett and Davies 1975: 145–151; Barnett 1982: 48.

[2] Fontan, Affanni *et al.* 2018 integrates all the 304 pieces excavated at or traced to Arslan Tash. The *publicatio princeps*, Thureau-Dangin *et al.* 1931, published only the excavated pieces.

[3] Winter 1981: 129, already argued in favour of Damascus as the creative center for the "South Syrian Style" but dated the corpus to the late 8th century. See discussion in Herrmann 1986: 30–31.

Figure 1. Lady at the Window, type 1. Arslan Tash. Ivory. 9th–8th centuries BCE. Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe. Photo © A. Caubet

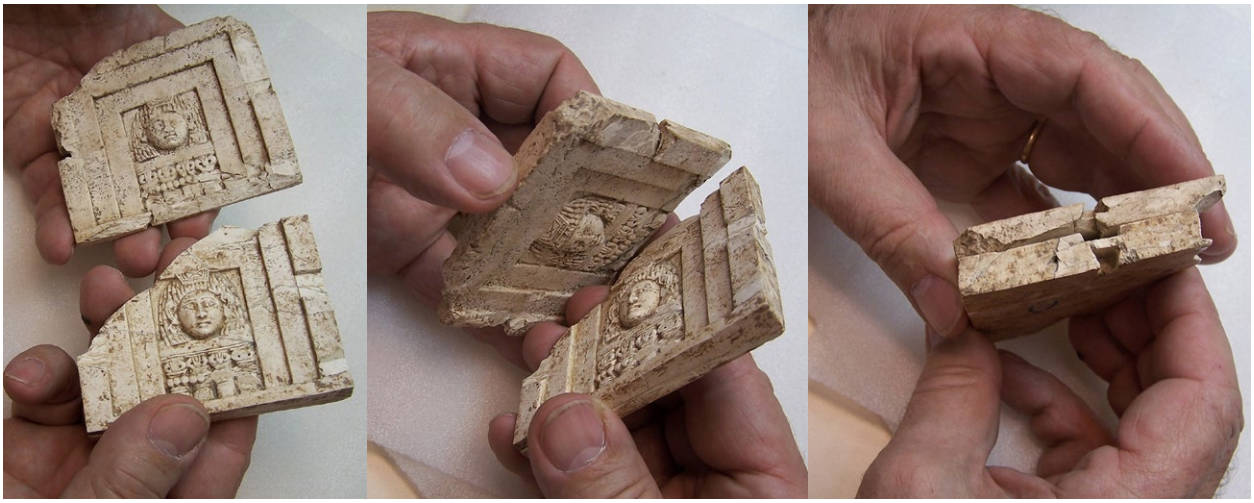

Figure 2. Demonstration by F. Poplin (2005) of the original position of two Arslan Tash panels in the tusk. The relief of the head does not exceed that of the plaque. Ivory. 9th–8th centuries BC. Louvre, Paris. Photo © A. Caubet.

Arslan Tash corpus (Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 12–43), a number comparable to that of the "Suckling cow" (48) or the "Birth of Horus" (24) from the same site. For the present purpose, they are assigned morphologically to three different types.

Type 1.

This is the most complete image, known by 16 plaques (Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 12–27). The head of the Lady appears inside a triple recessed window frame (Figure 1). These are all solid plaques carved in low relief (there are no openwork plaques as in Nimrud),[4] always cut from the heart of the tusk, and oriented transversally: i.e. the orientation of the scene is perpendicular to that of the tusk, and the carved scene faces towards the inside of the tusk: the plaques may have been sawn two by two, face to face (Figure 2). Their height of ca 7,3 cm to 8 cm, gives an indication as to the diameter of the original tusk. The lady's head is not visible in the profile view (as opposed to type 2, below). Paint has been applied on the recessed frame

[4] As for instance Herrmann 1986: nos. 102–109, 467–468.

Figure 3. Lady at the Window, type 2; box-like frame. Arslan Tash. Ivory. 9th–8th centuries BCE National Museum, Aleppo. Photo © A. Caubet.

(Alberic *et al.* 2015). The plaques were attached with swallow-tail mortises, and glue was made to adhere by scratching oblique lines or picking the whole reverse. This fixing technique is different than that of other panels from Arslan Tash; for example the "Birth of Horus" plaques. The Lady at the Window panels may have been assembled two by two (Fontan *et al.* 2018: 45). The carving is very fine, with slight variants of style that indicate several hands were at work. Cat. 22 and 23 may be from the same master, cat. 15 and 16 may have been carved by the same hand, and even taken from the same tusk (Figure 2).

The recessed frame is present only in our type 1, either because it was not needed to express the purpose of the image, or because a frame in another material was provided for the following types 2 and 3.

Type 2. The Lady in a box-like frame

This group (Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 37–43) is characterised by a cloisonné technique (Figure 3): a thin border encases the panel on three sides, without a base, resulting in a kind of box divided in three by a horizontal frame in the center, incrusted with transparent glass.[5] This group is remarkable by the triple repetition of the various components of the scene: three box-like spaces, three pillars (instead of four in type 1), three petals on each capital, supporting a triple stepped abacus, three vertical facets on each pillar shaft. The Lady's wig ends in three ringlets, the head ornament has three droplets, the loop ear-rings – three pendants. This repetition may have a magic significance; it certainly implies a close relationship between the craftsmen.

[5] On glass inlays in ivory, see Herrmann and Laidlaw 2021.

Figure 4. Lady in the window, type 3. Arslan Tash. Ivory. 9th–8th centuries BCE. National museum, Aleppo. Photo © A. Caubet.

The plaques of this group were fastened with glue, and in two cases, a mortise was drilled vertically into the top of the head.

Type 3. Reduced version of the Lady

This is a reduced version of type 2, without the box-like frame (Figure 4) (Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 33–36). Technically, it shares with type 2 the high relief of the head, that exceeds the depth of the balusters; the central space is incrusted with glass; the balustrade has four pillars instead of three in type 2. Slight stylistic variants are observed in the shape of the wig and the presence or absence of droplets on the head jewel.

The plaques of this group were fastened to the support with glue.

Papyrus and window

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to pay attention to another group: the papyrus panels (Figure 5).[6] In the Arslan Tash corpus, they are carved from the median part of the elephant tusk, in a format and size similar to that of type 1 above. Two double mortises in the back are carved in vertical symmetry, suggesting they might have been affixed on top or below another panel of similar format. Glue was also used.

The papyrus, shown alternatingly in bud and in bloom, form a vegetal hedge, emphasized by red pigment. They occupy the same place as the balustrade in the Lady's panels, and may be considered the equivalent of the

[6] Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 235–241; cat. 239 and 241 insert the window motif within an oblique frame.

Figure 5. Row of papyrus. Arslan Tash. Ivory. 9th–8th centuries BCE. Badisches Landesmuseum, Carlsruhe. Photo © A. Caubet.

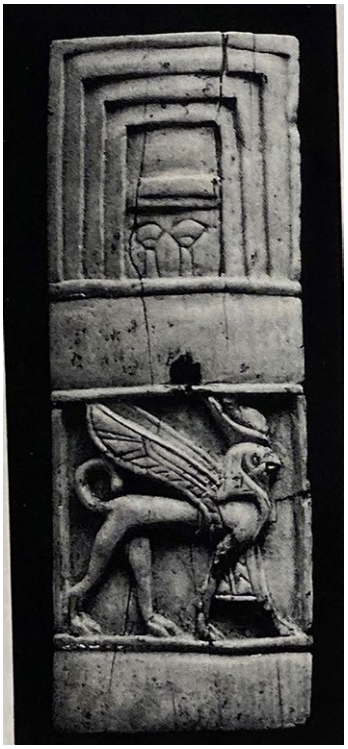

Figure 6. Window with papyrus. Nimrud. Ivory. 8th BCE, after Herrmann 1986: pl. 51, n° 239.

floral pillars. The upper compartment where the Lady's head would be expected is left empty.

An iconographic relation between the papyrus group and the window group is established by several panels from Nimrud where papyrus plants replace the pillars in the recessed window, in which no head appears (Figure 6) (Herrmann 1986: pl. 51, nos. 239–242; Rehm 2003: fig. 21).

Preliminary conclusion on the Technique

The size, the differences in the carving technique and the attachment system indicate that the function and purpose of the different types were not the same: they may have been chosen deliberately by the craftsmen who wanted to apply them to an element of furniture, a bed, a seat or stool, a table or a chest. The protruding head in types 2 and 3 is an important factor, as it rendered the panel particularly fragile if set in an exposed place of the furniture. They may have been placed by sets of two (Fontan *et al.* 2018: 60, fig. 52). I propose type 2 and 3 may have been set as twin figures within the same frame, a disposition adopted two centuries later on the bed of Ashurbanipal in the Banquet scene from Nineveh (Figure 7).[7] A further combination of panels is suggested by the possible association of the Lady and the papyrus pieces.

More speculation on the placement would be hazardous, but it is safe to conclude that there was a correlation between iconography and technique: each type examined above has its own debitage and carving technique and its own attachment system (Caubet 2022). In her comments in the Nimrud corpus, Georgina Herrmann remarks on the variety of techniques and style for this popular theme. The openwork technique is not represented at Arslan Tash, but two Nimrud panels in "Intermediate tradition" (Herrmann 1986: no. 409 and 1992: nos. 110–111; also Wicke 2009) are close parallels to our cat. 28–30 (Fontan *et al.* 2018). The Arslan Tash assemblage, now fairly safely attributed to artists working for the court of Damascus, probably at the time of Haza'el, brings further arguments to localize the "Intermediate tradition" (Wicke 2009).

Analysis of the architectural motif

The Egyptianizing look of the Lady at the Window motif is typical of the influence the Egyptian visual arts exercised over the culture of the Levant. The concept of a "window of appearance" was initiated in Egypt by Akhenaten for the royal couple to display

[7] Julian Reade wonders (personal email, January 2022) "whether the decoration of Ashurbanipal's bed is an allusion to his international sphere of influence, like the vines above (Elam) and the thick hanging necklace (as Albenda suggested). In that case, the double woman-at-window might allude to the Phoenicians overseas, especially Cyprus".

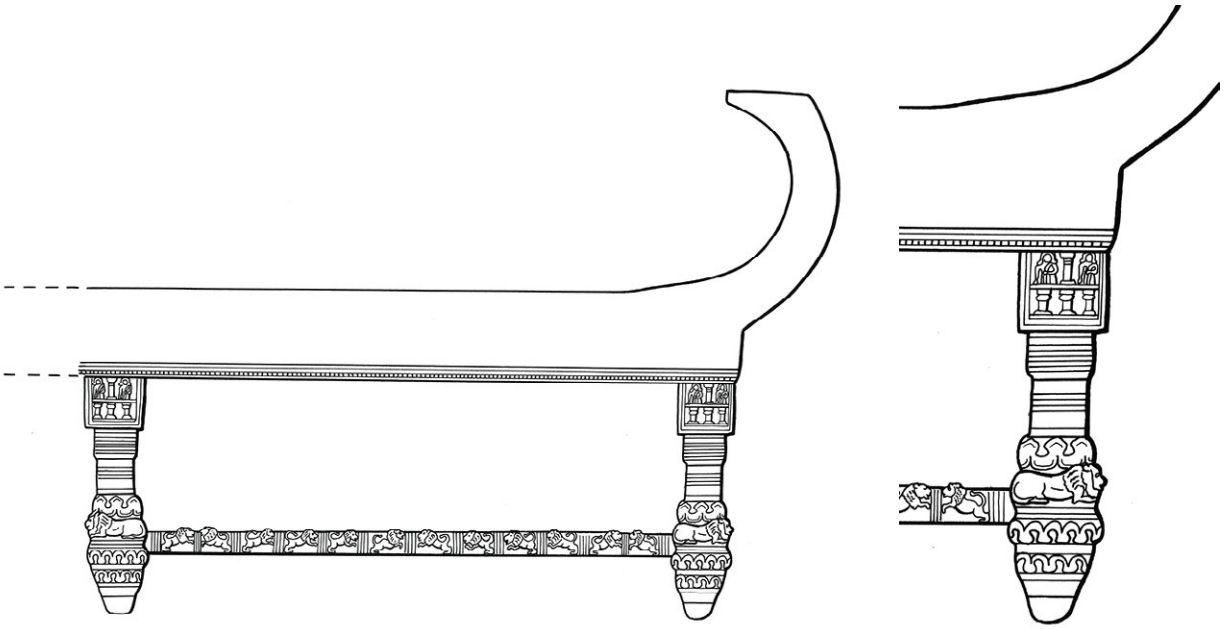

Figure 7. Banquet scene of Assurbanipal at Nineveh. Gypsum. 639–631 BCE. Original The British Museum, London. Drawing by Caroline Florimont, Louvre.

themselves to the people during special events (Kemp 1976; Kloska 2019); it may have been adopted by Egypt's Syrian neighbours. The actual shape of these windows however, calls for closer inspection.

The window frame

In Egypt, images of recessed frames were used to decorate tombs and sarcophagi since the Old Kingdom.[8] With the New kingdom, a design of pylon façade was frequently given to small artifacts, for instance sistrum and pectorals in the shape of miniature buildings (Montet 1951: nos. 505 and 712; Cenival *et al.* 1987: no. 85). The pylon design, topped by its characteristic Egyptian profiled lintel, became popular in the late Bronze and Iron Age Levant.

In Syria, multiple windows were a typical feature on terra cotta architectural models produced during the late 2nd millennium BCE, and may reflect real buildings (Figure 8). Mullioned windows are frequent on these models (Margueron 1982: figs. 3, 4, 5; Muller 2002: pl. XXXVIII B; Rehm 2003: figs. 26–27) and houses with double windows are visible on Assyrian reliefs[9] depicting Syrian cities: Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh narrates his campaigns in the Levant with great attention to these topographic details (Rehm

Figure 8. Architectural model. Emar. Terracotta. Ca. 1200 BCE. Louvre AO 27905. Photo © A. Caubet.

[8] For an example of a "False door" on Old Kingdom mastabas and sarcophagi, Ziegler 1993: 30, 64–65, 203.

[9] On the bas reliefs representing enemy cities, see the chapter by Maria-Grazia Masetti-Rouault in this volume, pages 273–312.

2003: fig. 20). The figurative decoration applied on the terracotta models, included naked female figurines, often several examples of them on the same model, associated with birds, snakes, bulls and felines. In the Iron Age, those architectural models were reduced to the façade entrance, probably by synecdoche, as *pars pro toto* image of the whole temple; in many cases, two naked female figures flank each side of the niche entrance (Muller 2002: figs. 177–182; Gubel 2002: cat. 71–75, examples in stone; Rehm 2003 figs. 29–30).

In the Mediterranean, windows encasing frontal human figures were often depicted on Minoan frescoes, Mycenaean vessels, and Cypriote metal stands (Kourion krater: Vermeule and Karageorghis 1982: III 12, 18; Enkomi stand: Matthäus 1985: cat. 703) (Figure 9). The window frame gives special force to the representation and sets it aside from the rest of the scene. The imagery endured into Iron Age Cyprus: miniature terracotta models depict a female head in a window or a pillared porch (Caubet 1979; Fourrier and Queyrel 1998: cat. 408–409; Yon and Caubet 2001; Muller 2002: pl. XXVII A). Images of windows without the head were also produced in Cyprus since the 2nd millennium: the stone slab from Hala Sultan Tekke (Åström 1986: 16, fig. 20; Yon and Caubet 2001: 148, fig. 3a), with its multiple mullioned openings above a recessed door, is a Late Bronze Age precursor to a group of Iron Age tomb entrances from Cyprus (Rehm 2003: figs. 13–18; Tamassos, Tomb 5: Buchholz and Untiedt 1996: 38–41, fig. 42 b–d). One example from Salamis is dated to the 7th century, another from Episkopi is inscribed in Phoenician with the epitaph of a man from Sidon, which points to a connection with Phoenicia, where several examples have been found.[10] The so called Hathoric steles from archaic Cyprus support a similar temple entrance, resting on top of the head of the goddess (Hermary 1985; Caubet, Fourrier and Yon 2015: 334, fig. 14) (Figure 10).

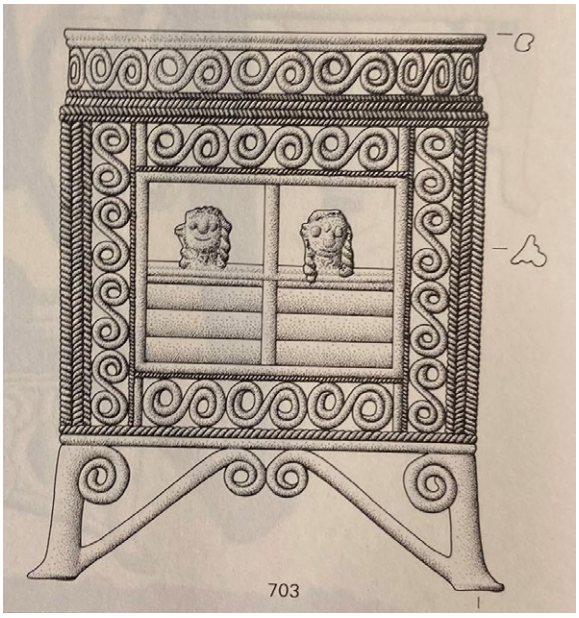

Figure 9. Stand. Bronze. Enkomi. Ca. 1200 BCE. Original British Museum, London. Drawing after Matthäus 1985.

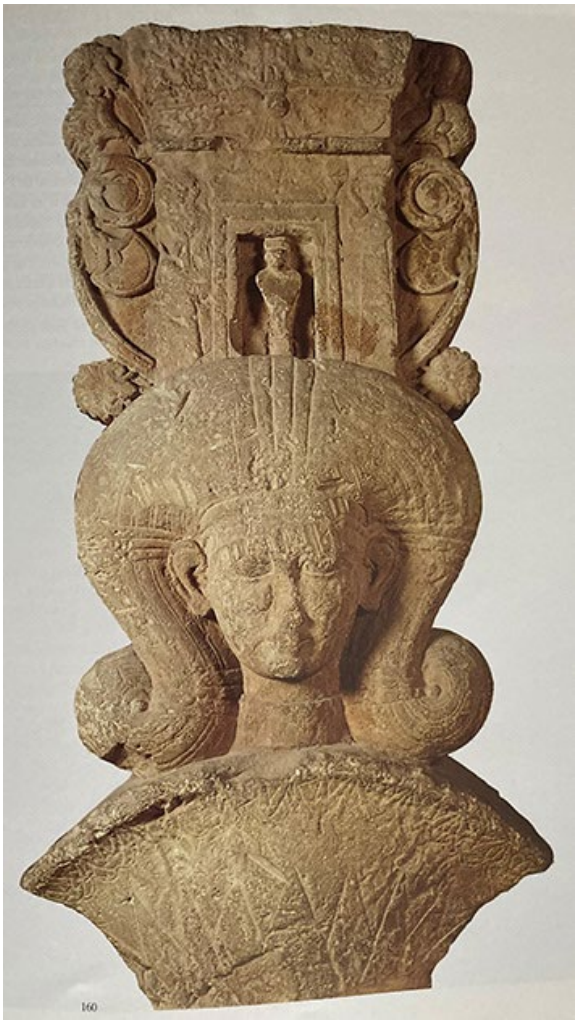

Figure 10. Anthropomorphic stele. Kition. Stone. Ca. 500 BCE. Musée du Louvre AM 93. Photo © A. Caubet.

The balustrade

The pillared balustrade is present on all the ivory pieces of the Lady at the Window: it seems to be the necessary part of the imagery, as important as the head of the Lady, more than the recessed frame. The pillars support floral capitals which are probably derived from New Kingdom Egypt; in Cyprus and the Levant, floral pillars were used in real, monumental architecture such as the palace of Ramat Rahel (Aruz *et al.* 2014: cat. 68), and they were the probable models for the pillars Jachin and Boaz in the Jerusalem Temple (Gubel 2015). Produced in miniature, they served as legs of beds, tables, stools,

[10] Salamis Cellarka: Karageorghis 1969: 116, pl. 71; Episkopi: Rehm 2003: fig. 13; Pilides and Papadimitriou 2012: cat. 229; Umm el-'Amed: Gubel 2002: cat. 126.

incense burners and stands.[11] Those from the Arslan Tash ivories corpus (Fontan *et al.* 2018: cat. 192–196) are comparable to the legs of the bed and throne shown in Ashurbanipal's Banquet scene (*supra* Figure 7).

A balustrade is not a solid obstacle, because one can see through the upright bars. It marks the limit between two spaces, and, tantalizingly, leaves the possibility that the passage might be crossed. In the figurative sense, it separates and it connects two opposed concepts, such as the human and the divine, life and death. The liminal symbol endured through Antiquity into modern times. Mona Lisa's hand rests on a bar that separates her from the viewer, her back is set against the opening in a wall that looks over a dreamy landscape: Leonardo, with other artists of Northern Italy, introduced a formula invented by Jan Van Eyck of painting the model, seen in a three-quarter view "*in due occhi*" that replaced the traditional medal profile, and placed in a *trompe-l'oeil* architectural setting (Nuttal 2002: 207, ill. 231, 237–239). In Manet's *Le Balcon* (musée d'Orsay), the green shutters and wrought-iron balustrade separate the group of Berthe Morisot from the spectator, who is invited to take part in an invisible scene. As Suter pointed out (Suter 1992; Rehm 2003), the balcony balustrade remained a forceful symbol across time, endowed with multiple and contradictory meanings: the erotic significations are echoed in the balcony scenes of Romeo and Juliet and Don Giovanni (*Deh, vieni alla finestra*). The royal solemnity of the Pharaohs' appearances survives in the British Royals' salute from Buckingham palace or the Pope's benediction from the Vatican.

The head of the Lady

The rendering of the head varies in style and quality; the hairstyle, straight or in ringlets, closely resembles Egyptian coiffure, while the jewelry has parallels in Assyrian ornaments, such as the pomegranate pendants found in a queen's tomb at Nimrud (Aruz *et al.* 2014: figs. 3.14–15).

The identity of the lady has lent itself to multiple interpretations. Rehm suggests she represents by synecdoche (Rehm 2003) the "Naked Goddess" whose image recurs frequently on Syrian architectural models, cylinder seals or other prestige artifacts since the Bronze Age. She is closely associated with the royal family (Beyer 2020), and ensures the perpetuation of the dynasty by the production of an heir. The palace, the throne, and, most appropriately, the bed, were placed under the protection of the goddess image. These apotropaic powers extended also to the king's war equipment. The horse frontlet inscribed with the name of Haza'el found in the Heraion of Samos, is especially relevant to the corpus of Arslan Tash ivories and to the court of Damascus. It shows the image of the goddess multiplied by four, one supporting the three others on her extended arms, as in an acrobatic human ladder. It brought protection to the king as warrior and head of the armies Haza'el led against the Assyrians.[12]

Visual images of the Syrian "Naked Goddess" are frequently reduced to parts of her anatomy. For instance, Late Bronze age gold pendants from the Levant, present a range of variants, from the whole naked female body, to abbreviated images, limited to the head, pubic triangle, pair of breasts; sometimes only the outline of a vulva. The body parts point clearly to a role as a goddess of sexuality and fertility. When the face alone is shown, it also corresponds to a well-established visual convention of ancient Near Eastern art. "Masks" designate magic, supra-human beings, genies, and hybrids, endowed with the magical power of the eyes. Thus the so-called Humbaba (Graff 2012), the Bes image (Romano 1998), like the feminine face considered here, establish a forceful and immediate eye contact with the viewers, while forbidding any real encounter. In this way, the Lady at the Window of Arslan Tash is both a vision of the Naked Goddess reduced to her head, and an *apotropaion,* a magical protection affixed to the royal bed or throne.

The head in the Arslan Tash pieces is presented like an element of the architecture, an anthropomorphic stele. This may have been inspired by Egyptian Hathoric columns, or images of such columns,[13] from which derive the so called Hathoric capitals from archaic Cyprus. The latter are probably representations of the anonymous "Great Goddess" of Cyprus (Karageorghis 1977). They were part of the cultic environment and were associated with royal patronage, like their Egyptian Hathoric model; they received votive offerings[14] and were copied in miniature terracotta ex-votos.[15] What is significant for the present purpose is that the Cypriote anthropomorphic steles are composed of the same three parts as the Arslan Tash ivory panels, albeit arranged differently: the window frame, the pillar with floral capital, the feminine head. Most of the Cypriote steles are janiform, recalling the possible duplication of the ivory plaques.

[11] From a royal tomb, Tamassos: Matthäus 1985: cat. 615.

[12] Kyrieleis 1988; recent discussions of the inscription in Younger 2016: 258–260; Amadasi 1996; Amadasi 2018: fig. p. 15.

[13] Examples from Deir el-Medineh (ca. 1295–1186 BCE): Andreu 2002: nos. 193–194.

[14] Painted vessels from Amathus depict cultic scenes involving the "Hathoric" image: Hermary 1985: fig. 25.

[15] Kition miniature steles (ca 700–650 BCE): Caubet, Fourrier and Yon 2015: cat. 2.84–90, fig. 10, p. 258.

Forerunners at Ugarit

Literary sources from Ugarit point at Late Bronze Age Syria for the Lady's origin. The goddess "Athtart of the Window" is mentioned in a ritual calendar from Ugarit which lists a number of instructions for processions and offerings, in which the king has to take an important part:

> "When Athtart-of-the-Window enters the pit in the royal palace, pours a libation into the pit of the royal palace"
>
> (Wyatt 2002: 357).

There are several other occurrences of the name of Athtart in the texts from Ugarit, where she is generally associated with the goddess Anat: in a mythological fragment, she appears as a huntress (Wyatt 2002: 370), a character that connects her with the horse rider goddess introduced into Egyptian religion, together with other Asiatic deities, during the New Kingdom (Leclant 1960; Röllig 1992). The name goes back as far as the 3rd millennium in the texts of Ebla, and in many Iron Age inscriptions (Puech 1993; Wyatt 2002: 357), distributed throughout the Mediterran ean. The statuette from Seville is a rare association of the inscribed name with a figuration of the goddess: she is seated on a throne, naked, wearing an Egyptian style wig similar to that of the Arslan Tash Lady.[16] The duality of Athtart and Anat in the Ugaritic texts tends to dissolve in the Iron Age, perhaps in the process of substitution of one by the other or fusion of the two goddesses, unless she is the same deity under different names (Xella 2014: 533).

In the Ugarit ritual, Athtart-of-the-Window herself, or rather her image or statue, is to be introduced in the "pit" of the palace; another translation for this term as "alcove" (Puech 1993) might be better, as it may refer to a specific architectural feature within the temple, possibly to serve for the appearance of the divine image: there is archaeological evidence for such arrangement in the sanctuary of Kition, built under the patronage of the Phoenician dynasty, where a screen wall separated the *cella* from the Holy of Holies, with perhaps an opening in the center of it (Callot 2002: 58, 63).

A window is the subject of a curious anecdote in the Ugarit cycle of Baal, a paean to the royal dynasty, composed by Ilumilku the scribe.[17] Baal complains he has no house, and asks Kothar-and-Hasis, the architect god from Crete, to build him a palace. The whole poem is now interpreted in the light of the terrible earthquake cum tsunami that destroyed the city ca 1250 and the subsequent reconstruction. In the beginning, Baal forbids Kothar-and-Hasis to put in a window:

> "But Valiant Baal replied:
> 'You shall on no account put a window in the house,
> (nor) a casement in the midst of the palace!
> Lest Pidray, daughter of Light, should escape
> and Taliy, daughter of Shower, should flee"
>
> (Wyatt 2002: 103).

But later, Baal changes his mind:

> "And Valiant Baal said:
> 'I shall do it, Kothar, this very day,
> Kothar, this very hour!
> Let a window be opened in the house,
> a casement in the midst of the palace
> and let a rift be opened in the clouds
> according to the word of Kothar-and-Hasis!"
>
> (Wyatt 2002: 108–109)

In the end, there will be a window opening in Baal's house, so the god may soar "to the clouds" in his manifestation as thunder and rain. In the study of the temple of Baal on the acropolis of Ugarit, analyzing its destruction and reconstruction after the earthquake, Callot suggests a zenithal window may have been added as a new feature, an improvement on the former temple (Ortlund 2004; Callot 2011: 58, 63; Roche-Hawley 2016: 92). This architectural innovation may have been inspired by the Egyptian Window of appearance: there was one in the Memphis temple built by Merenptah (Kemp 1976; Kloska 2019), who reigned at the time Ras-Shamra Ugarit and the Baal temple were being rebuilt, under the impulsion of the local dynasty.

Another source of inspiration for the window in the palace of Baal may be sought in the architecture of Crete, whence the architect-god Kothar and Hasis is assumed to have come. In Minoan architecture, a systematic juxtaposition of windows and doors within the same timber frame (Palyvou 2018) is reflected in the miniature window motif represented on artifacts from the Mycenaean and Cypriot world (*supra* and Figure 6). Building practices observed at Ras Shamra share many of the architectural traditions observable in the Minoan/Mycenaean world (Callot 1994). These two sources of inspiration were perhaps combined at Ugarit, the Egyptian concept of appearance window

[16] Seville-Carambolo (ca. 700–600 BCE): recent reference and image in Aruz *et al.* 2014: cat. 106.

[17] Wyatt 2017. For a syllabic version of the story in an oracular text, see del Olmo Lete 2006.

on one side and the material realization anchored in Mediterranean masonry techniques on the other.

In fine, it is also perhaps significant that the excuse for Baal's original decision against an opening was his fear that his two womenfolk might escape: "Taliy, Daughter of Shower" and "Pidray, Daughter of Light" (Wyatt 2002: 71–72) are weather goddesses themselves. Their (uncontrolled?) manifestations through a window may have been a matter of concern: this is a tempting interpretation, the more so if the Ugaritic name Pidray is related to that of the fatal Pandora (Wyatt 2002: 71–72, footnote 11).

Seeing double, or more. "And then, there were none".[18]

Also significant in the Ugarit religious text is the duality of the goddesses. Taliy and Pidray, Athtart and Anat, are mentioned together, their personality and character not easily distinguished. A dual arrangement is recurrently observed on Bronze Age and Iron Age artifacts: two heads in a double window, two naked goddesses flanking the door of the models, janiform "Hathoric" steles from Cyprus. The assemblage technique of our Arslan Tash ivories types 2 and 3, suggests two may have been set side by side within the same frame, as on the bed of Ashurbanipal.

The naked figure is often multiplied, on the architectural models, on the horse frontlet of Haza'el. Does that correspond to multiple identities and powers of the goddess? Or did ancient Near Eastern people believe in the magical force of repetition? Repetition of visual images may have been a way to get in closer contact with the gods. Repeated gestures and dance in the performance of rituals conduced to an ecstatic trance, as in the story of 140 prophets of Baal who prayed, chanted and danced for hours (I King 18. 28–26). Repetition, or parallelism, was extensively used in the poems from Ugarit and the Bible: the content of one line is repeated or developed in slightly different words (Wyatt 2002: 17). This may have been a mnemonic device. But repetition has its own virtue, it engenders rhythm. And Rhythm, Number and Measure imitate the Harmony of divine Creation.

Conversely, the absence, the emptiness of the window or the door, introduces an element of mystery, of expectancy, to be found also in the contemporary votive thrones of Phoenicia (Gubel in Lipiński 1992: 472; Gubel 2002: no. 118), that may be is a step towards an invisible and inaccessible deity, and aniconism.

Conclusions

It is not clear when and how the epiphany images acquired a purely erotic signification, possibly after the Iron Age.[19] The biblical hostility towards the Phoenicians may explain how the appearance of Jezebel came to be described as a call for illicit sex (Kings II. 9.30), when it may have been the kind of ritual display of the royal couple practiced in Egypt since the time of Amarna. Knowledge of Babylonian practices of sacred prostitution may have been transmitted to the Greek world through Greek authors. The theater and playwrights like Aristophanes, may explain the popularity of the "hetaera in the window" in South Italian vase painting, for instance.[20]

The Lady at the Window theme illustrated in the Arslan Tash ivories, is one of the many images related to royal ideology. It was exceptionally successful, and endured through various mutations and forms and significations in the course of time.

This theme is anchored in the Levantine Bronze Age culture, embodied in the dominant Egyptianising visual forms. It gave visual form to concepts related to kingship and the divine: the king and the royal couple as providers of descendants, the king as warrior, implored the protection of a fearsome goddess, Hathor in Egypt, Astarte in the Iron Age Levant, endowed with a multiple personality of sexuality, violence and domination.

[18] Agatha Christie.

[19] Rehm 2003 analyzes the transmission of late Babylonian sources to Graeco-Roman traditions.

[20] Bell krater from Paestum, ca. 360–340 BCE, British Museum 1865.0103.27. My thanks to J. Mertens and Keely Heuer for reference to South Italian vase paintings.

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Chapter 17:
Revisiting the seated figure on wall painting no. 9 from Kuntillet Ajrud … Once again

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Abstract. This contribution examines the views of Beck and Ornan on the painting of the seated figure from building A. Although the figure might be an enthroned ruler, it is not clear whether it is holding a lotus in front of its mouth, as posited by Beck. There are many comparisons of such seated rulers holding a lotus, but also a cup or a cup and a lotus. Some form part of banquet scenes. It is proposed that the figure in this instance might be holding a cup. A drawing with a new reconstruction is given. There are also scenes of women holding a cup/lotus, but alternatively spindles, a typical female attribute. It is speculated that the Ajrud figure might be a female ruler, viz. a queen. This could be an additional example of what is known as seated females, viz. women rulers or queens in Western Asia.

Keywords: Kuntillet Ajrud, enthroned figure, throne, banquet, lotus, cup, king, ruler, garment, queen.

The seated figure – introduction

Much ink has been spilled on the finds from Kuntillet Ajrud (Horvat Teiman) in Sinai,[1] material which, as Beck wrote, "converted many biblical scholars into art historians" (2002: 217), but the real reason for this output might be the obsession with the "YHWH and his a/Asherah" inscriptions found at the site.[2] In a 2016 article in the journal *Tel Aviv*, Ornan *revisited* the drawings and paintings. What is of interest here are the fragments of wall paintings (Cornelius 2022). One from the entrance court of building A (Meshel 2012: 16–19) is 32 cm. in height, making it the largest of the wall painting fragments. It depicts what looks like a seated figure (Figure 1).[3]

Out of appreciation for Tallay's work on the visual material of Western Asia and especially this particular item, I aim to revisit and propose a fresh reconstruction of the particular figure. First the descriptions by Beck and Ornan will be summarized; this will be followed by some comments and then an attempt at a new understanding of the figure will be made.

Pirhiya Beck

The Kuntillet Ajrud visual material under discussion was first published by Beck (1982), who indeed produced "meticulous, pioneering work," as Ornan (2016: 3) describes it. The original article from the journal *Tel Aviv* was republished in the collection of Beck's articles (2002: 94–170) and in the volume by Meshel (Beck 2012: 189–192, figs. 6.39–6.39a).[4] The present article will use the 2012 publication as the basic text.

Beck describes a head, chair and garment, part of the chair frame, pomegranates(?), plant and an unclear element. There is the profile of a human head facing right with an eye in red outline, eyeball and hair in black, perhaps a lock of hair. A red object with black markings conceals the mouth. The figure wears a yellow garment bordered with a red neckline and double collar-band in red with black dots. The chair is in ladder-and-dot design and also in yellow and red with black dots.[5] The arms of the figure are difficult to reconstruct, Beck states that it is "most probably shown holding the lotus flower"; she talks of Egyptian-like elements and refers to seated figures with lotus flowers from other Canaanite–Phoenician works: Ahiram, the Megiddo and Tell Farah south ivories, and Ramat Rahel. These seated figures may have formed part of a ceremony with more figures and plants in the background.

Later Beck (2000: 178–181; 2002: 217–219) returned to the Ajrud material and made the figure a king of Israel or Judah. Regarding the chain of lotus flowers and buds (Beck 2012: 192–194 = Figure 2) she speculated that they might have served as a frame for the panel with the ruler.

[1] Recently Meshel (2012). I thank Prof. Silvia Schroer and Dr. F. Lippke for help with the figures.
[2] For the inscriptions see Meshel 2012: chap. 5 and recently Leuenberger 2021.
[3] Cf. Beck 2012: 184–198 for the wall paintings at large.
[4] Fig. 6.39a is a photo of the original and fig. 6.39 a reconstruction in colour and greyscale.
[5] Beck (2012: 180–181, figs. 6.30, 6.30a) compares it with the seated figure on a similar chair from Kuntillet Ajrud.

Figure 1. Reconstruction of seated figure from Kuntillet Ajrud with lotus (Beck 1982: fig. 21).

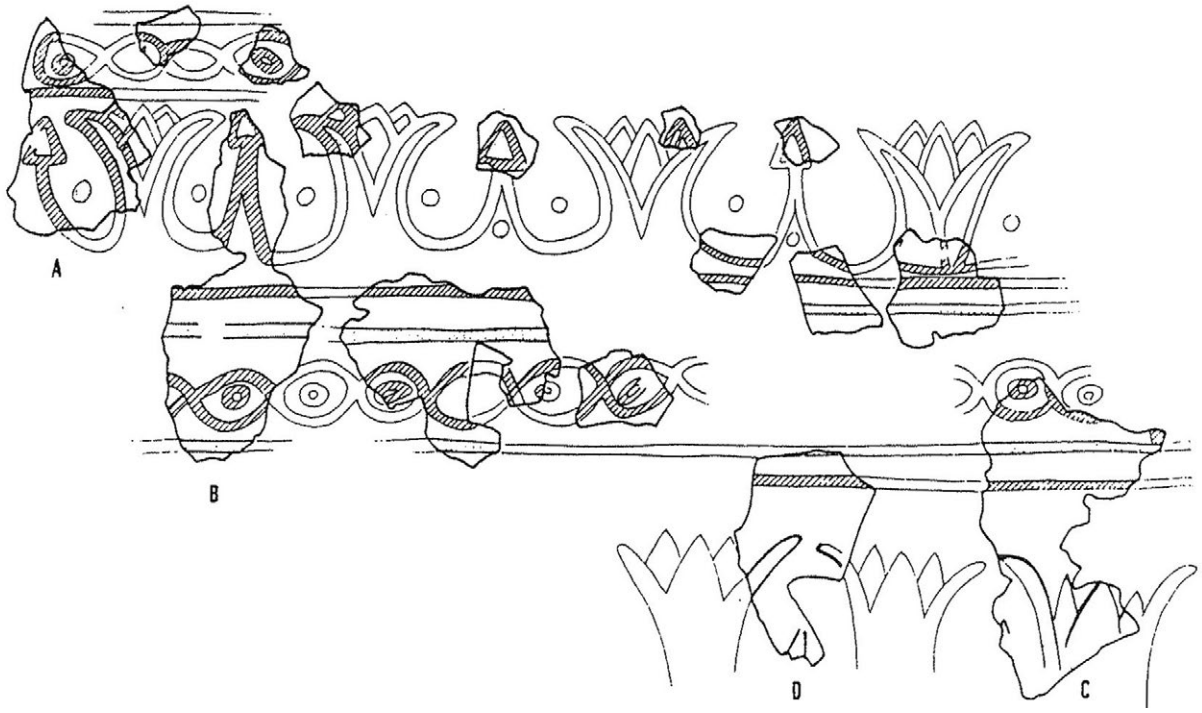

Figure 2. Chain of lotus flowers from Kuntillet Ajrud (Beck 1982: fig. 22).

Tallay Ornan

In an article in *Tel Aviv* 2016 Ornan makes some general observations on the Kuntillet Ajrud material. The *pithoi* drawings should be taken as sketches made in preparation for the wall paintings and not as final works of art (2016: 4).

She then turns to what is called "The king and the activities of the royal court" (2016: 6–8) and the enthroned figure receives attention. In this regard she writes: "... identification of the long black line in front of the ear as a sidelock, rather than a strand of hair characteristic of Egyptian representations (Beck 2012: 192), enhances the male gender of the enthroned figure" (Ornan 2012: 7). There is also another figure, its right arm issuing from a garment sleave behind. The main figure is identified as a king of Israel or Judah and compared to a seated figure with a standing figure behind it on a Samaria ivory (Figure 3). The straight-angled throne with horizontal bars is compared to an ivory from Rehov (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1670; Mazar 2007).

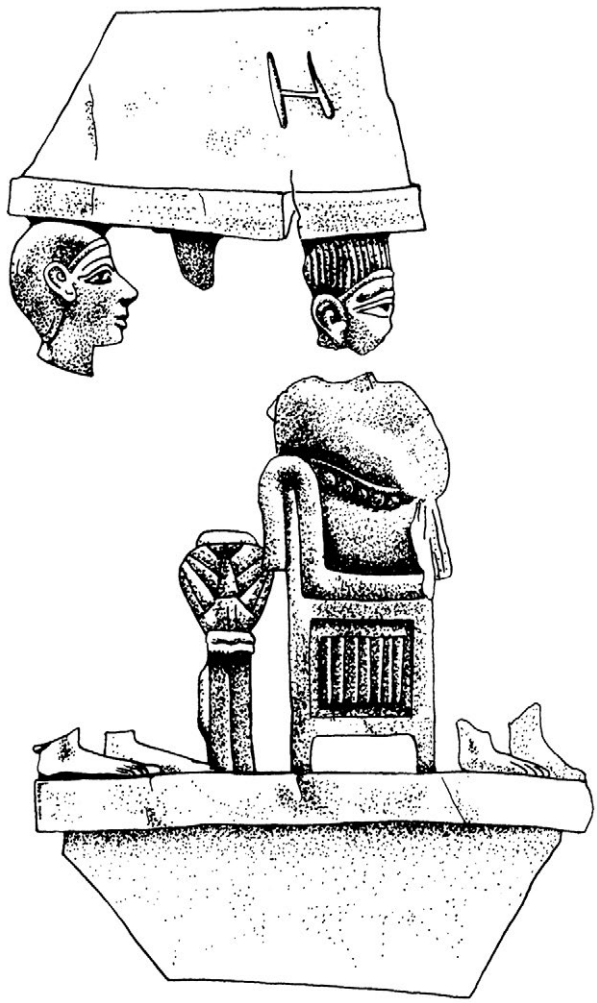

Figure 3. Seated figure on Samaria ivory (Keel and Uehlinger 2012: Abb. 239). Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT, Freiburg.

Beck (2012: 192) reconstructed a lotus flower held in the left hand. But Ornan (2016: 7) makes some important remarks on this and expresses certain reservations:

> "In such representations, the lotus is always a distinct element that is not 'blurred' by attachment or overlapping with another pictorial component. These depictions correspond to the ancient Near East ern method of visual presentations in which a meaningful signifier – in this case a lotus – required a paratactic manner of display, i.e., it had to be shown as a separate element that would be easily recognized and comprehended by the onlooker. According to Beck (2012: 192) the lotus held by the king conceals his mouth. If indeed, this manner of representation of the lotus is exceptional in relation to the other Levantine depictions of kings holding lotus flowers, it does not accord with the paratactic mode of ancient Near Eastern art and calls into question the present reconstruction."

Comments on Beck and Ornan

There seems to be a consensus that the figure is a seated one and therefore a ruler and part of a royal banquet. Schmitt (2001: 96) talks of a "Darstellung eines thronenden Herrschers" and "eine kultisch–höfische Szene." Keel and Uehlinger (2012: 278) also have an enthroned ruler. Schroer (2018: 632) says the depiction is a "Bankettszene."

Meshel (2012: 19) asks whether this is "a female deity?" perhaps trying to link it with the goddess Asherah, which is a less likely possibility. Ziffer (2013: 51) calls it an "official image of the king of Israel." She reiterates an important point made by Winter that royal images are not private portraits of an individual, but "image of my kingship" – perhaps better translated as "image in my office of kingship" – an official image of the *ideal* king. The findspot at the entrance of building A (Meshel 2012: fig. 2.13) shows it was a central figure, visible to people entering. Perhaps this image is the *crown* of all the Kuntillet Ajrud material (pun intended!).

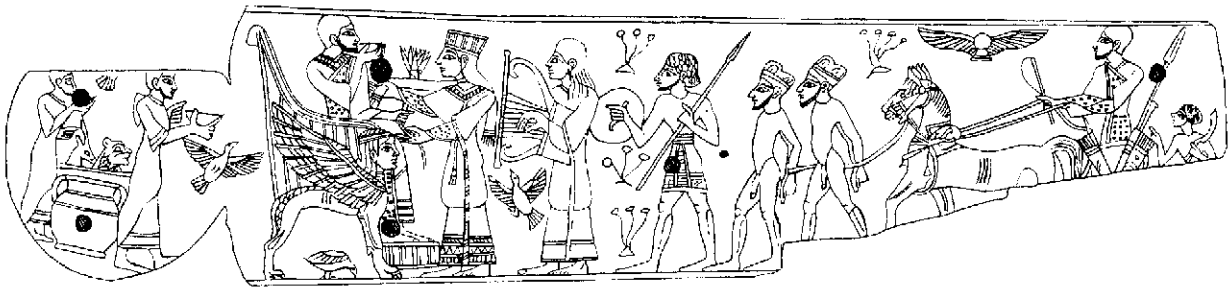

Figure 4. Seated figure on Megiddo ivory (Keel 1980: Abb. 233). Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT, Freiburg.

When playing the "game of thrones," it becomes clear that the figure stands in a long tradition of seated enthroned rulers, in many cases enthroned at a banquet.[6] The following comparative material might be cited:[7]

1. Late Bronze ivories from Megiddo (Figure 4) and Tell Farah south (Koch 2014; Schroer 2018: Abb. 947, 956): holding drinking bowl and flower.[8]
2. Byblos : sarcophagus of king Ahiram on a sphinx throne with feet on footstool holding a cup and drooping lotus flower (Schroer 2018: Abb. 962).[9]
3. Bronze bowls from Cyprus and Greece with seated figures holding flowers and a round object/drinking cup (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1675–1676).
4. Zincirli : King Barrakib holding a flower in his left hand and gesturing with the other, and the official Katumuwa with a bowl, and an unclear cone-like object rather than a flower (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1887, 1679 respectively).
5. Tell Halaf : seated figure smelling flower (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1365).
6. Seated figures on Late Bronze stamp seals from Beth-Shean and Beth-Shemesh holding large lotus flowers in front (Keel 2010: Abb. 138 and 206).
7. Neo-Assyrian ruler on his throne (Magen 1986: Tafel 16–17). In some cases holding a cup in one hand and a flower and a staff in the other.
8. Samaria ivory (Figure 3): enthroned figure with a flower and a standing person behind (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1670).
9. Seated figure from Ramat Rahel (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1943).
10. Achaemenid ruler on throne with sceptre and lotus flower (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1974).

There are also scenes where the seated figures can be identified as female, viz. queens:

1. Seal of queen Pu-Abi at banquet with cup (Beck 2002: 61, fig. 5).[10]
2. Veiled women with cups from Mari (Nadali 2021: figs. 3–4).
3. At Urkesh seals show in one case a king holding the cup, but in another a queen (Ziffer 2005: figs. 12–13).[11]
4. Neo-Assyrian queen Libbali-sharrat (Figure 5) and king Ashurbanipal with cup and flower in a famous banquet scene (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1966).[12]
5. Pyxides from Nimrud depict a seated woman with long hair, either with cup and flower or with cup (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1673 and 1674).
6. Pyxis from Tell Tayinat showing figure with cup (Osborne 2020: fig. 4.1).
7. Statue of seated female figure from Tell Halaf with cup (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1360).[13]
8. Queen of Karkamish with spindle[14] (Hawkins 2000: pl. 8).
9. Stela with two veiled women from Maraş, both are holding pomegranates and then respectively a cup and a mirror[15] (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1361).

[6] Cf. *inter alia* also Selz 1983; Winter 1986; Bonatz 2000: 60–64; Beck 2002: 58–93; Ziffer 2005 and 2013; Rehm and Eder 2016; Cornelius 2018 with literature; Schroer 2018: 82, 110, 632–648; and Berlejung 2022. Detailed catalogues appear in Bonatz 2000 and Rehm and Eder 2016.

[7] For the sake of convenience the figures in Schroer 2018 are cited, with added references in some cases. There are many more examples (esp. from Anatolia and the Levant) in Bonatz 2000 and Rehm 2016.

[8] On the first one from Megiddo Ornan (2002: 467) writes: "Here the female royal consort is shown with the king, together holding a lotus blossom, which symbolizes their (joint?) suzerainty."

[9] On the motif of the lotus see van Loon 1986; Bleibtreu 1987-1990; Bonatz 2000: 100–102.

[10] See Suter 2016: 37–40 on banquet scenes in the early periods in Mesopotamia. I thank Akira Coetzee for reminding me of this reference.

[11] See on this seal Ornan 2002: 465.

[12] Cf. also Ornan 2002: figs. 2 and 3.

[13] Bonatz (2000: 29) argues for a female because there is no beard and long hairlocks. Rehm (2016: 39–40) doubts the traditional female identification and Schroer (2018: 402) leaves both options open.

[14] See on this female symbol Bonatz 2000: 79–82; Ornan 2002: 471; Rova 2008 and Völling 2011–2013.

[15] On these female symbols see Börker-Klähn 1957-1971; Ornan 2002: figs. 13–15; Rova 2008; Pappi 2009–2011; Bonatz 2020: 82–85. Compare the Neo-Assyrian queen with mirror (Ornan 2002: fig. 1) although not seated.

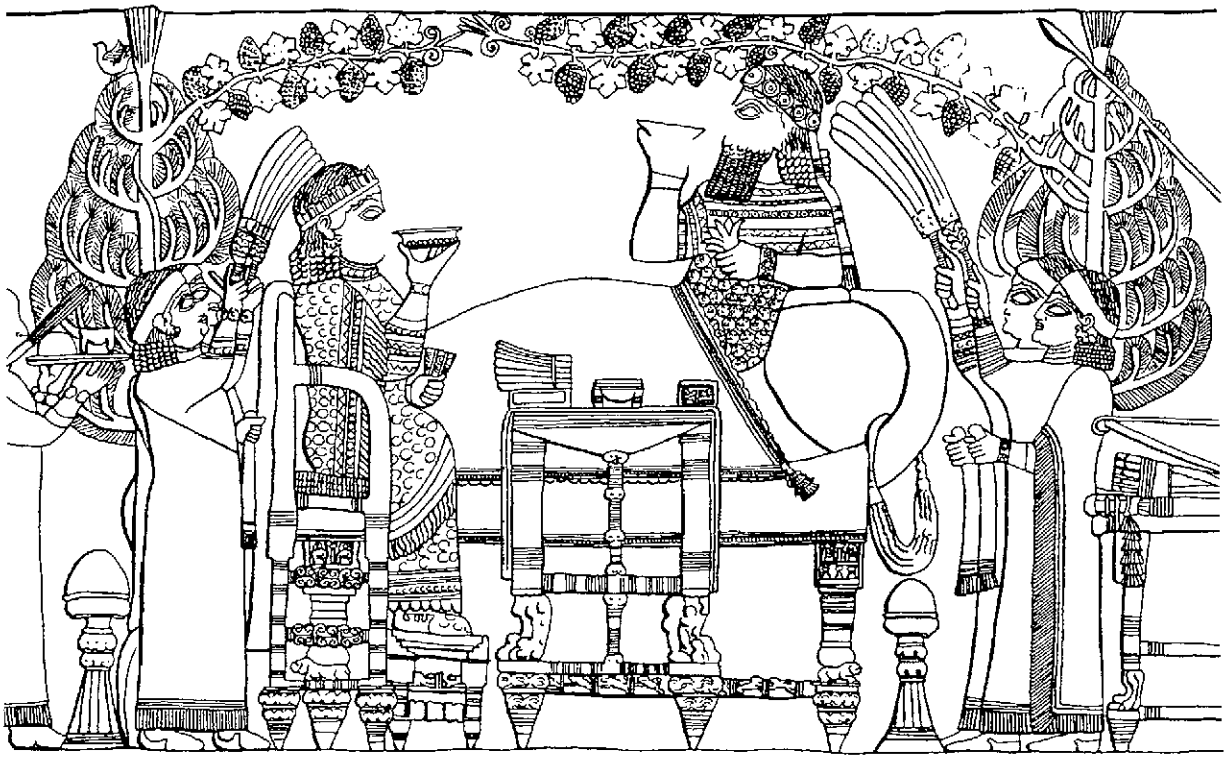

Figure 5. Seated queen Labbali-sharrat (Keel 1986: Abb. 83). Stiftung BIBEL+ORIENT, Freiburg.

Figure 6. Reconstruction of seated figure from Kuntillet Ajrud with cup (drawing by R. van Dijk-Coombes based on Beck 1982: fig. 21): a) with crown; b) without crown.

10. Zincirli stela with well-dressed woman holding cup and flower[16] (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1681), also one from Ördekburnu with flowers and perhaps a spindle (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1680).
11. Woman with veil holding a cup and spindle (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1678).
12. Bronze belts from Urartu used by women depict female banquets (Schroer 2018: 110).

These scenes are important because of the broader context and relationship with other figures, missing at Kuntillet Ajrud. The only possible context might be provided by the border of lotus flowers as shown by Beck (Figure 2). Ornan (2016: 16) also reflects on the importance of these motifs within the imagery of Israel.

The seated figure – a new reconstruction and interpretation

There is no problem reconstructing a ruler with a *lotus* here; there are many comparisons as the list above shows, but the problem is that the flower conceals the mouth as shown by Ornan (2016: 7). Moreover, the flower is also not held vertically and against the nose as in Egypt, but horizontally.

Is it not possible that the figure is holding a *cup*, for which there are again many comparisons? Some pictures show a figure holding both a flower and a cup. Unfortunately, nothing of the arms or hands remains, so reconstructions of these are mere speculation.

In the light of the many comparative items of seated figures, the following reconstructions are proposed:

1. holding a lotus flower (Figure 1)
2. holding a drinking cup (Figure 6)
3. holding a lotus flower and a drinking cup
4. holding a lotus flower and a staff.

As there seems to be something held in front of the mouth of the figure, two examples might be brought into the game: the Megiddo ivory and queen Libbali-sharrat (Figures 4–5). From these examples a new reconstruction is made (Figure 6a-b).

But then there is even an additional possibility. At Kuntillet Ajrud there is a drawing on pithos A of a seated figure playing a harp (Beck 2012: 169–173). Whether it is male or female is another issue. Dever goes even further and links it with the goddess Asherah (2005: 164–167), although there are no divine attributes (Cornelius 2009: 82–83). The object in front of the mouth of the wall painting 9 figure does not seem to be a harp, making the depicted a musician. Besides, it is situated too centrally to be a mere musician.

The figure on the chair/throne is mostly taken to be male (Ornan 2016: 7). There are no clear male attributes, except for the long black sidelock. As shown above, there are many examples of seated women at banquets, some of whom could be identified as female rulers. Although it is not very clear, Keel and Uehlinger (2012: 280) ask whether the Samaria ivory (fig. 3) could be a woman (queen?).[17]

It is speculated that the seated figure – which has no beard to make it clearly a male as with the seated figure from Ramat Rahel (Cornelius 2015) – might possibly be a woman, viz. a queen. There are also pomegranates next to the figure (Beck 2012: 189 and fig. 6.39). Some of the examples show women with pomegranates, which is one of their attributes. In the Anatolian–Levantine world it is (like the mirror) also the symbol of the goddess Kubabba (Schroer 2018: Abb. 1322).[18]

Conclusions

Tallay made an important remark:

> "... in contrast to modern notions, the perception of pictorial expression in the ancient world was not as an end in itself but rather as a means to communicate with the divine and at the same time to convey official state messages" (Ornan 2016: 4).

In this regard the Kuntillet Ajrud material is a good example. Whether it is an enthroned king or perhaps a queen, the seated figure is also of importance as some kind of official message.

The seated figure could be part of a banquet scene because of the cup reconstruction. Yet perhaps it is not only a case of "king and cup " (Winter 1986), but a *queen and cup*.[19] This could add to the imagery of the throne and the enthroned which Tallay dealt with (Ornan 2019), but also to what she wrote on the female ruler or queen (Ornan 2002), for which there are not that many examples compared to the male ruler or king in Western Asian imagery.

[16] She might be royal because of the workmanship and palatial find-spot (Lemaire and Sass 2013: 73–74).

[17] Schroer (2018: 110) refers to the enthroned queen mother (1Kgs 2,19; Neh 2,6).

[18] Renate van Dijk-Coombes reminded me of this idea.

[19] As Renate van Dijk-Coombes used it when we discussed the whole issue.

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Chapter 18:
Sennacherib's open-air sanctuary at Khinis/Bavian: Quarries, quarry workers, recarved panels, and polylithic bulls[1]

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Abstract. An open-air sanctuary at Khinis was created by the Assyrian king Sennacherib where a quarry for white limestone had been found beside the River Gomel. The quarrymen came from the area of Eski Mosul, mediaeval Balad, where a quarry of similar stone, west of the Tigris, had been worked. Ishtar of Nineveh as Ninkura, goddess of sculpture, presided over the place. A sculptured panel in the Southwest Palace at Nineveh shows the work being carried out at Khinis; mention of the cubic sculptured block marking the head of the canal system is now recognised in royal inscriptions. An experiment in making polylithic colossi from Khinis was carried out for the Armory at Nineveh. The Bavian Inscription indicates that the sanctuary guarded against interference from Urartu protecting the supply of water to the plain of Nineveh.

Keywords: Khinis, Bavian, Sennacherib, sanctuary, sculpture, colossi, quarry, Nineveh, Urartu.

The Assyrian king Sennacherib created at Khinis an extraordinary range of sculptures all made from the white limestone that was quarried there. They include a huge cubic monolith that was carved in relief on all four sides; it now lies broken in the water at the head of a great canal leading off water from the river Gomel. The area is dominated by other sculptures and inscriptions carved on the living rock. The main sculptures on the rock-face are enclosed as a tableau in a frame. The cubic monolith has sculpture on two sides of the larger fragment, but there are also visible remains of a "Gilgamesh figure" behind the man-headed winged bull and possibly another figure as a sphinx, of which a back leg is faintly visible so that the "Gilgamesh figure" may have stood between a bull and a sphinx (Figure 1). On the best preserved, front side are the figures of king and gods standing alike on pedestals (Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935: pl. XXXIV B; Ornan 2007: 169).

Inscriptions, each within a parabolic frame, spread around on various rock surfaces, accompany an image of the king. In them a cuneiform text of Sennacherib includes a description of a religious ceremony in which offerings including a golden turtle were cast into the water. A modest fountain, flanked by lions sculpted in the rock, is located on the slope below the main panel. The plan drawn by Jacobsen and Lloyd (1935: fig. 10) shows the position of the main features (Figure 2). Not far away alongside canals there are at least seven more panels of sculpture, of which the best known is the one at Faida, some of them perhaps carved in the reign of Sargon II, father of Sennacherib.

Those aspects in combination indicate an Assyrian outdoor sanctuary of unparalleled grandeur (Dalley 2010: 247). The site as a celebration of water outshines the sculptures and inscriptions found at the source of the river Tigris to which previous Assyrian kings contributed, although that site has the added interest that the temple gates at Balawat show the ceremony celebrated there by Shalmaneser III.[2] Sennacherib's sanctuary at Khinis celebrates the construction of a great network of canals leading down to Nineveh and demonstrates his own role on a grand scale. The story of his engagement there involves also his father Sargon II, whose influence is explored here in several respects including the use of white limestone, and keeping Urartian aggression at bay.

In addition to the rock sculptures still visible at Khinis, one outstanding feature is to be seen only in eroded remnants. Seldom mentioned in publications two damaged pairs of lion's paws are still visible, located centrally on top of the great framed rock panel, and similar remains, less well preserved, on one end of it. They were sketched in the mid 19th century (see e.g. Larsen 1994: pl. VII),[3] and are still marginally visible on the photograph of Zeinab Bahrani (2017: 250, taken in 2013) (Figure 3). Those remnants, restored in the mind's eye, seem to show that there was originally a central figure at the apex, perhaps Ishtar in a dual role as goddess of Nineveh and as Ninkura goddess of craft

[1] Also called Khanusa, Khinnis, Hinis, and Bavian.

[2] See Schachner and Radner 2009 for illustrations and references.

[3] John Curtis 2020: 79 has shown that Thomas Septimus Bell, an illustrator for Layard, and who was drowned at Bavian, is likely to be the man who drew the famous picture, and Julian Reade suggests that it was based on a drawing made earlier by Layard. I am grateful to them for profitable discussion, and to Zeinab Bahrani for confirming the date when she took the photo.

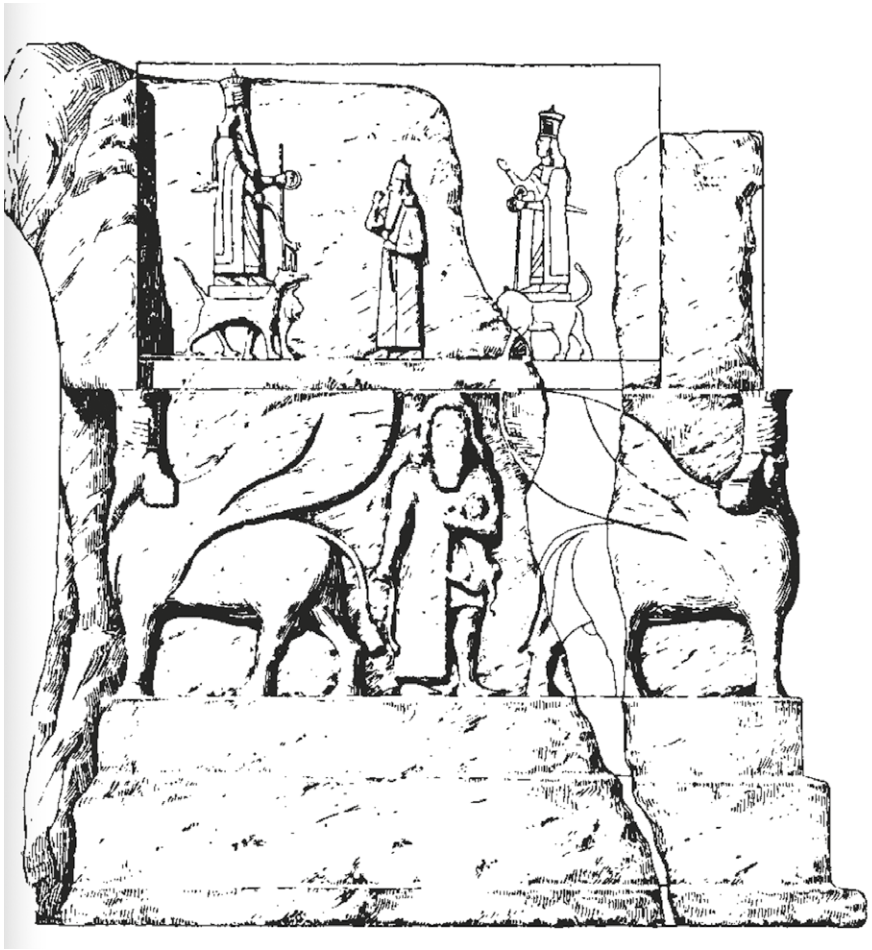

Figure 1. The cubic Monolith at Bavian showing the king in company with the great gods (from Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935: fig.12).

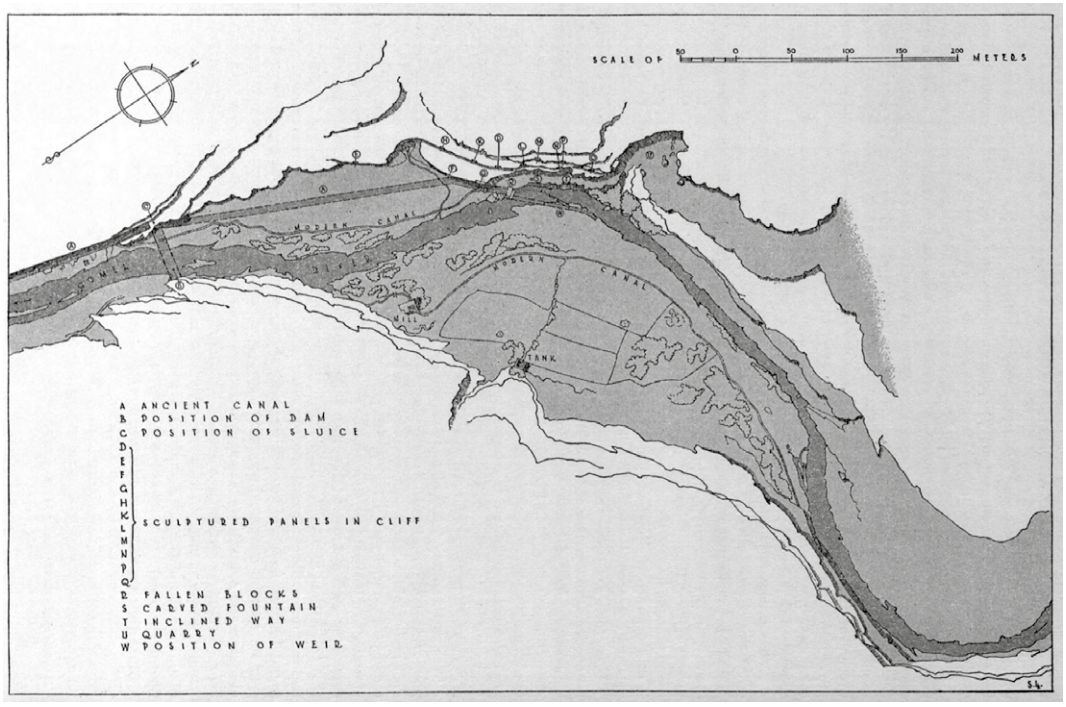

Figure 2. Plan of Khinis sculptures on the monolith (from Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935: fig.10).

Figure 3. Two damaged pairs of lions' paws located on top of the framed rock panel, from the photo taken in 2013 from across the gorge, by kind permission of Zainab Bahrani.

skills, seated on her lion-throne, with perhaps a pair of recumbent lions in attendance at each end of the frame, presiding over the scene below. For comparison, on a Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal, John Macginnis (2017: fig. 45: 3) has described a profile view of Ishtar seated on a lion-throne, as a likely representation of Ishtar-of-Nineveh. Bachmann (1927) imaginatively restored the three sets of lions' paws differently, as bases for three standing deities, perhaps with Palladio's villas in mind. According to the current interpretation of anthropomorphic figures, the scene with Ishtar seated on a lion throne, attended by the two flanking lions, may represent the holy shrine of the great goddess as the city goddess of Nineveh "who rules over the totality of everything", with a procession of the gods preceding the king below at the right end, being greeted by the king on the left as they enter the temple of the goddess. This interpretation, derived from defined horizontal registers, is applied by Tallay Ornan (2007: 167) to figures at the same site, sculpted on the cube of white limestone where water is diverted from the river Gomel into the canal. It is a great pleasure and particularly appropriate to dedicate this paper to her.

Unexpectedly the well-preserved, detailed royal inscriptions of Sennacherib found at Nineveh appear not to mention the sanctuary except as a source of white limestone. One aim of this paper is to explain the supposed omission. Another aim is to understand the name of the town somewhere close to the quarry, *uru Balâdāya*, usually read as *uru Balāṭāya* "town of Balāṭāya" (Figure 4),[4] enabling the identification of the workmen who cut the white limestone out of the quarry as experts from another quarry of white limestone near Eski Mosul. A third aim is to suggest from recent research that a scene sculpted on a panel in Sennacherib's Southwest Palace shows Khinis with quarrymen at work, and the cubic monolith. I am grateful to Daniele Morandi for affirming that it would have been impossible to haul a full size gateway bull monolith intact from Khinis to Nineveh, allowing the inference that the famous scenes on reliefs discussed below may relate to monoliths that remained at Khinis as part of the great sanctuary. Finally the significance of naming Urartu in the long Bavian inscription is discussed.

Plans are now afoot to include the area in the development of the Nineveh archaeological and environmental park, including all that can be traced of

[4] Grayson and Novotny in two volumes published in 2012 and 2014; Bagg 2017. This type of place-name was not included in the study by Luukko 2018.

Figure 4. Map showing the two areas of white limestone quarries at Khinis and Balada (extract from Parpola and Porter 2001: no.4, p.28).

Sennacherib's irrigation network. For a useful overview of past work on the site, copiously illustrated, see Fales and Del Fabbro 2017. The project is led from the University of Udine in co-operation with local scholars and officials in Dohuk, the capital city of the province in which the site lies. I hope that the study given here may add in a small way to what the team there can provide as information for the tourists and scholars who visit the archaeological park. I warmly thank Francesca Simi, Roberto Orazi, and Daniele Morandi Bonacossi for sharing with me the report of their ongoing work, and for critical remarks on a very early draft of this paper.

The material

Royal interest in stones

A close reading of a short section of Sennacherib's royal inscriptions, detailed below, implies that it describes stonework sculpted for and at the site at Khinis, not for colossi of white limestone transported in a single block to Nineveh, as has previously been supposed (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 10). Elsewhere in the sections specifically relating to his building inscriptions Sennacherib had "72 bull and lion colossi of white limestone" installed in the gateways of his palaces at Nineveh, but there is no record of white limestone colossi in the catalogue of stonework known

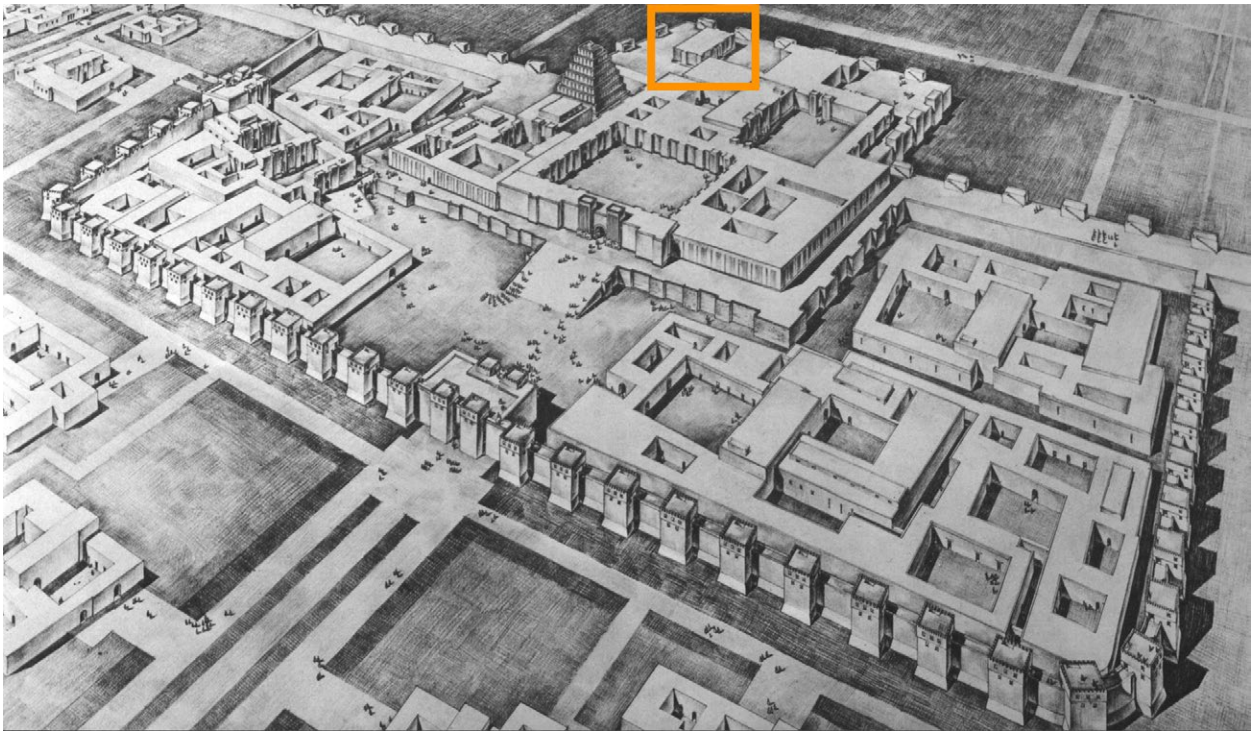

Figure 5. Plan of Sargon's palace buildings at Khorsabad (from Loud and Altman 1938: pl.1 with Monument X highlighted).

from the Southwest Palace, nor of any analysis of the stones from which the colossi were made (Bleibtreu and Middleton in Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol. 1). However, it is argued below that at least some white colossi were carved and installed in or near Khinis, and others found in the Armory (also known as the Arsenal and as the Review Palace), built by Sennacherib on Nebi Yunus. But the white limestone colossi found at the Armory are extraordinary: they are polyliths–constructed from many sculpted blocks fitted together. This technique has not been found elsewhere.

Layard (1853: 215–216) had thought the Jerwan aqueduct was part of a causeway that ran all the way from Bavian to Nineveh, so that the water "must have been pent up between quays or embankments at times of religious ceremonies", an inference rejected by Bachmann, by Jacobsen and Lloyd (1935: 4–5) and by Morandi Bonacossi (2014). It is reckoned that the quarry was too far distant from Nineveh to allow the transport of a block big enough for a colossal man-faced bull of the kind well known from the Southwest Palace at Nineveh and elsewhere. The quarried stone and the polylithic sculptures represent a fashion for stone that stayed white, emphasised in the repeated use of the explanatory word "white" in Sennacherib's royal inscriptions. Two quarries are known to have supplied it: the one at Tastiāte, the other at Khinis. The quarry at Tastiāte was used presumably by Sennacherib's father, named only as 'my ancestor', tactfully referring to Sargon in whose reign the disaster recalled by Sennacherib took place (see below). In Sargon's Monument X at Khorsabad, the *bīt hilāni* pavilion (Figure 5), which has been linked in its fashionable black and white stone contrasts to those of the well-known *bīt hilāni* at Tell Halaf in Syria (Albenda 1986: 29, 47, 48 and no. 57; Reade 2008: 16),[5] the remains of black stone as well as white limestone column bases were found. The building was presumably completed by the time the main palace at Khorsabad, founded in 717 BCE, was inaugurated in 706 (Frame 2021: 31).

The disaster at Tastiāte

Sennacherib's predecessor(s) had planned to bring the white limestone *pīlu peṣû* found at Tastiāte for making colossi, "inexpertly" because that quarry was on the west side of the river. To cross the river to reach Nineveh and then to haul the colossi out of the boats and up on to the high mound successfully required a quiet flow. As described above, the white stone was needed in particular for Monument X at Khorsabad located east of the river, but a decision to cross the river in spring when the waters were rising was a rash one, a casualty of haste.

[5] Sargon was the first king of Assyria listed as founding a new royal line stemming from Habigal / Hana / Hanigalbat (Fales 2014).

> "They (earlier kings, my ancestors) quarried mountain sheep colossi of white limestone in the town Tastiāte which is across the Tigris river, ... in spring time they brought colossi across to this side of the river with difficulty in tall boats. (By miscalculation) they sank large boats at the quay entrance and exhausted their crewmen, damaged their health. With force and extreme difficulty, they struggled to transport and install at their gates" (Grayson and Novotny 2012: nos. 15.v, 16.v, 17.v).

Dragging colossi uphill to Khorsabad rather than Nineveh would have exacerbated the difficulties. Sargon II would have sent his quarry experts from Tastiāte to find new sources of appropriate stone on the east side of the river, avoiding the need for shipping across the Tigris and they found what he needed at Khinis, although it proved impossible to drag monolithic colossi from there to Nineveh. Sennacherib as crown prince was governor of the province in which Tastiāte was located, became king in 704 BCE, and began to build his great Southwest Palace at Nineveh. The quarry was located

> *îtê uru Ninua ina erṣet uru baladāya* "in the vicinity of Nineveh city, in the district of the town / settlement of people from the town Balad".

It is not normal to mention a disaster of any kind in Assyrian royal inscriptions; the reason for recording this disaster may be connected to a new initiative: individual blocks of sculpted stone for reassembling as polylithic colossi, came directly from the sunken colossi, not simply the discovery of a new quarry. Analysis of the limestone at Khinis (Morandi pers. comm. Inscriptions: Fales and Del Fabbro 2014; Grayson and Novotny 2014 nos. 225 and 226) has confirmed that the quarry supplied the huge number of white stone blocks used for Sennacherib's aqueduct at Jerwan, which could have been transported there as required without difficulty. Plans had to be altered for Nineveh.

Smaller items of white limestone were more easily transported. A column base for Monument X at Khorsabad would have given no trouble. An inscribed horse-trough of white limestone excavated at Nebi Yunus describes Sennacherib's interest in different kinds of stone and the medical and magical qualities that were ascribed to them for horses (Grayson and Novotny 2014: no.132). That inscription specifies white limestone, as do other inscriptions related to the Armory at Nebi Yunus. Texts concerning the Southwest Palace have the details of other types of stone on the longer royal inscriptions written on bull-colossi, and their qualities for human health, but not white limestone (Grayson and Novotny 2012: nos. 39:41b–51a, similarly nos. 4, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 73, 74, 151). The manual of traditional scholarship in which each variety of stone can be characterised is *Aban šikinšu*, which one may very loosely translate as *Treatise on the Nature of Stones*; allusions to that manual have been recognised by Grayson and Novotny (2014: p. 94, note to lines 8' and 12'–13' referring to Schuster-Brandis 2008), recorded in their notes to the relevant passages in the royal inscriptions. From those inscriptions comes an insight into the personal character of the king; previous kings did not display such an interest in quarries in royal inscriptions, nor illustrate their difficult work on orthostats and colossi. For this reason, it is likely that Sennacherib's scribes and sculptors gave correct information in the inscriptions and panels of sculpture.

Types and names of stones used for late Assyrian buildings

The "white limestone" at Khinis is distinguishable from the nodular gypsous alabaster / limestone that is readily available at many places much closer to Nineveh. Also distinguishable is breccia (a red magnesian limestone with white veins found in the middle Euphrates area), and fossiliferous (calcite) limestone from Mt. Nipur, modern Judi Dagh.[6] Akkadian terms for the various types of rock do not correspond closely with modern terminology; even in English various types of limestone have different names. Scientific analysis has been carried out on rather few objects, but some confusions are found, not least because the understanding of words and locations has changed in the last two decades.[7] The stones, given in Akkadian with their current translations, are:

1. "white limestone" *pīlu peṣû*; "limestone" in general, *pīlu*. The two sources of white limestone for builders at Nineveh and Khorsabad were at Tastiāte west of the Tigris, south of Eski Mosul, north of Nineveh, and at Khinis in the vicinity of Nineveh. The prestige of this stone is emphasised by Ashurnaṣirpal II, who boasts of having a statue of himself made out of it, but he does not name his source (Grayson 1991: 202).
2. "Mosul marble", "gypsous limestone", "gypsous alabaster", *gišnugallu,* which turns grey as it ages. According to Layard "Mosul marble" was "a kind of coarse alabaster or gypsum. Large

[6] Maps with likely locations of all the places named in this paper, as currently identified, were published by Parpola and Porter 2001: map 4. Two volumes of Assyrian place names with references and succinct discussions as well as a map were published by Ariel Bagg in 2017.

[7] Two reports from the research laboratory of the British Museum are restricted to panels, colossi and stelae in the British Museum (Middleton, Appendix 1A and 1B in Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol I: 41–43). Bianchetti (2017) reported on the scientific analysis of some different types of stone, but did not try to match them with the Akkadian words given in the cuneiform inscriptions (e.g. Grayson and Novotny 2012 vol. I: nos.15, 16, 17).

masses of it everywhere <around Nineveh and Nimrud> protrude in low ridges from the alluvial soil, or are exposed in the gullies formed by winter torrents." He further remarked that the stone "when fresh, greyish white on exposure soon changes, growing darker and ultimately becoming a deep grey" (Layard 1850: 254, 314). Gypsous alabaster there often has brown veins.

3. "Breccia" is the accepted translation of *turminabanda*, described in a recent study as a red magnesian limestone with white veining. However, 'the brown veins within the whitish gypsum mass ("Mosul marble", *gišnugallu* "alabaster"), which make the stone look similar to breccia, are composed of silicates' (Bianchetti 2017). So the term may include a veined alabaster with different colouring, allowing an overlap in the terms *gišnugallu* and *turminabanda*.
4. The two words *parūtu* and *gišnugallu* may distinguish translucent white alabaster obtained from Mt. Ammanana in the Levant from best gypsous alabaster included in our modern term Mosul marble. But sometimes they may overlap. Although the lexical list *Ura* "differentiates *gišnugallu* and *parūtu*, later Assyrian texts sometimes used the two words as synonyms" (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary G: 106). Thus *gišnugallu* may be used for "breccia" and for "alabaster", both corresponding to modern general use of the term "Mosul marble" according to variations in the appearance of the stone.
5. Fossiliferous limestone is transcribed as *pendû,* written with the logogram NA_4.^{d}ŠE.TIR (other possible readings of the logogram are *ašnan* and *ezennû*); Turner (in Barnett *et al.* 1998, vol. 1: 29) found that it was used for unsculptured orthostats in the Southwest Palace. Perhaps the fossils themselves were so intriguing, and thought to be efficacious for well-being, that they should not be obscured. Quarries have not been identified as far as I know.
6. As far as black stone is concerned, confusion over its identification is found in many records. "Black limestone" which is sedimentary, and "basalt" which is igneous, are both named by early excavators and later scholars as the black stone used by Sargon for stair-treads and for orthostats carved with scenes including hunting, excavated at Monument X. By comparison with other quarries, for example the well-researched Roman quarry at Göktepe in Caria, where breccia and marble were both found in the same outcrop (Attanasio, Bruno and Yavuz 2009), it is worth mentioning that other outcrops of rock in the vicinity of Khinis may include types of rock other than white limestone.

The reliefs

The bollards / stanchions

In 2014, when making a documentary in Iraqi Kurdistan, the team and I went to Khinis where on the steep sloping "ancient pathway" marked by Jacobsen and Lloyd (1936: fig. 11), I nearly put a foot down a circular hole, very roughly 25 cm in diameter deep and precisely cut; there were other such holes spaced out along the side of the path. The path led down from an overgrown area where the rock had been cut back, indicating a quarried area. The holes would have held stout bollards to which ropes would have been attached to control the descent of heavy stones from the quarry down to the river, canal, or pathway (Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935: 49). This feature can be identified on panel 64 from Court VI of the Southwest Palace (Figures 6a and b; Barnett *et al.* 1998: vol. I, 41–43) and it confirms the epigraph written on an adjacent panel, both on display in the British Museum (as detailed below). It portrays a scene of quarrying in a section of landscape with distinctive features related to the sloping path leading down from the quarry. As far as I know, this connection has not been made before because two of three epigraphs were only read correctly in 1997 (Grayson and Novotny 2014: nos. 73 on slab 60, and 74 on slabs 66 and 68). The correct reading by Frahm (1997: 126–127) came too late for Reade (1978) and Barnett *et al.* (1998). Detailed discussion of those panels is given below.

The goddess Ninkura

The name of the goddess Ninkura is associated with quarrying white limestone at Khinnis:

> "I had bull colossi and sphinxes of white limestone created and their forms perfected through the craft of Ninkura in the territory of the town of Baladeans" (Grayson and Novotny 2012: no. 17.vi.76–79).

The name in earlier times was given to a goddess of craft skills, later interpreted as a writing of the epithet *Bēlet-māti* "mistress of the land" / *Šarrat-māti* "queen of the land" (Cavigneaux and Krebernik 1998–2001).[8]

uru Baladāya as the name of the workmen's settlement at Khinis.

A new linguistic analysis of *uru Balāṭāya* (its current normalisation with *ṭ*) proposes a new etymology, preferable to Akkadian *balāṭu* "live, life". Place-names to the north of Nineveh, unless they are new Assyrian

[8] Cavigneaux and Krebernik do not discuss this occurrence, but give valuable references to the goddess in early texts as a deity of craft skills.

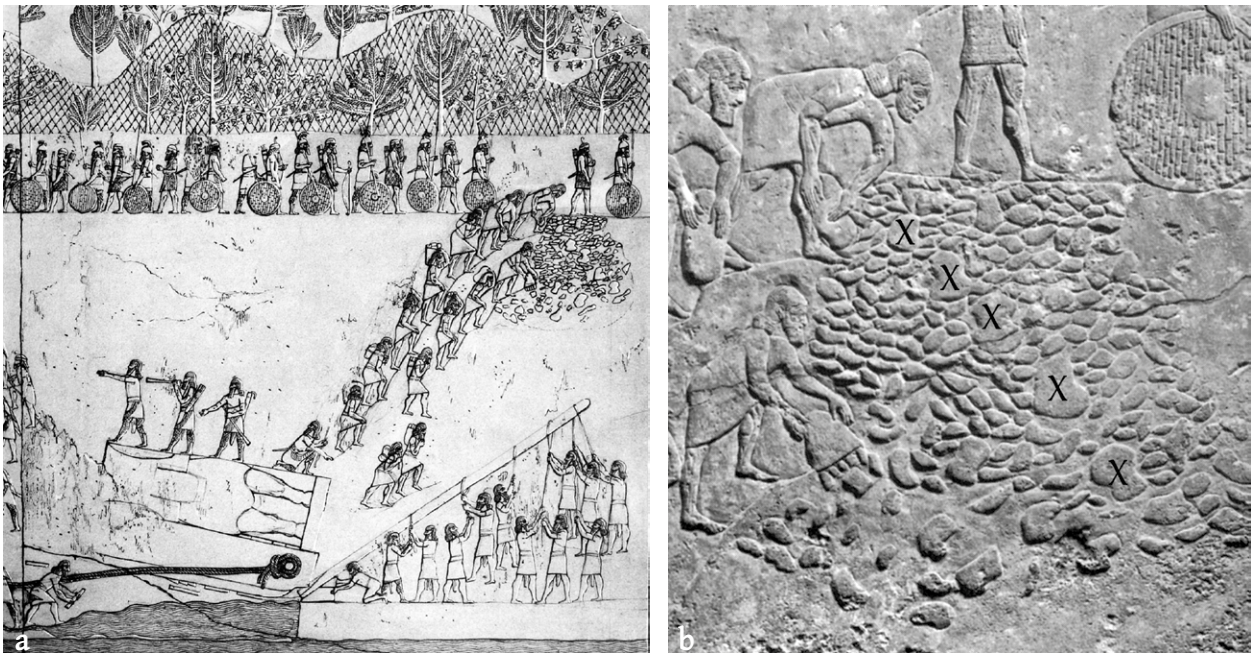

Figure 6a–b. a) Drawing of slab 64 from Court VI (from Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl.113, Or. Dr. I 57); b) Detail from Slab 64, photo plate 111 top right, bollards marked with Xs, thanks to Ian Cartwright, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University.

foundations, do not have recognisably semitic names; examples are Tastiāte, Maganuba, Talmussu, Tamnuna. Those names may date from a time when the area, not yet under Assyrian control, was populated by non-semitic peoples including Hurrians.

The gentilic / nisbe ending *–āya* identifies the town's inhabitants as migrants from a town *Balaṭ. The name is always written with the cuneiform sign DA, for which the reading ṬA is an alternative which supposedly connects it with *balāṭu* meaning "life", which is unprecedented for a place name; but no Akkadian word *baladu* is attested in the dictionaries, nor is a root BLD known. The ending *–āya* is expected to be attached to the name of a place (von Soden 1952: §56); an example comes from Neo-Assyrian ^{m}*uru Dūr-Šarrukkay(y)a* "the man from the town / city Dūr-Šarrukku." The formation is found in personal names, such as ^{m}*ninuāya* "man from Nineveh."[9] Perhaps the best comparison, however, comes from the cliff inscriptions at Khinis: ^{m}*uru šá lú šà-uru-a-a,* using the name *Libbi-āli* (*šà-uru*) for Ashur city, the phrase meaning a town of men from Ashur currently residing in the vicinity of Nineveh and Khinis. This had been interpreted to mean a settlement of Assyrians controlling river traffic to and from Ashur (Jacobsen and Lloyd 1935: 37 with no. 36 followed by Reade 1978: 167).

As Bagg (2017) showed, there are spellings of the place name Balad/ṭ without the *–āya* ending. They associate the town with the crown prince, who by this period had his establishment at Tarbiṣi, 5 km upstream from Nineveh. Therefore, the town Balad/ṭ is sought to the north of Tarbiṣi, near enough to be appropriate as a centre for the crown prince's responsibilities (*pīhatu*). The location at Eski Mosul, named Balad in the Middle Ages as proposed by Emil Forrer in 1920, has been largely accepted (e.g., Parpola and Porter 2001: 28). A change of the final consonant D to Ṭ is not an option in an alphabetic script of the Middle Ages, such as Syriac or Arabic. Bagg's comment, that the distance of up to 50 km between Eski Mosul and Nineveh is too great to allow *uru balāṭāya* with *îtê Ninua* in Sennacherib's royal inscriptions to refer to a quarry near Eski Mosul, is clearly appropriate.

To sum up: the location of *uru Balad* does not have to be the same as the location of *uru balādāya itê Ninua* "town of people from Balad, in the vicinity of Nineveh", on the east bank of the Tigris. The town at Eski Mosul was in the province of the crown prince, administered by Sennacherib during Sargon II 's reign. We can accept Forrer's location of Balad at Eski Mosul, on the west bank of the Tigris, and Bagg's assertion that Eski Mosul does not fit the description *itê Ninua* "in the vicinity of Nineveh." The reading DA instead of ṬA requires no change to the cuneiform orthography. The ending *–āya* refers to people who come originally from Balad / Eski Mosul, and we can infer that they were expert workers transferred from Eski Mosul to Khinis, probably during Sargon's reign. Reade has suggested that the houses

[9] Variant spellings are given by Jas (2001: 964). The translation given by Grayson and Novotny 2014: no. 223: 23 appears to be unaware of that understanding.

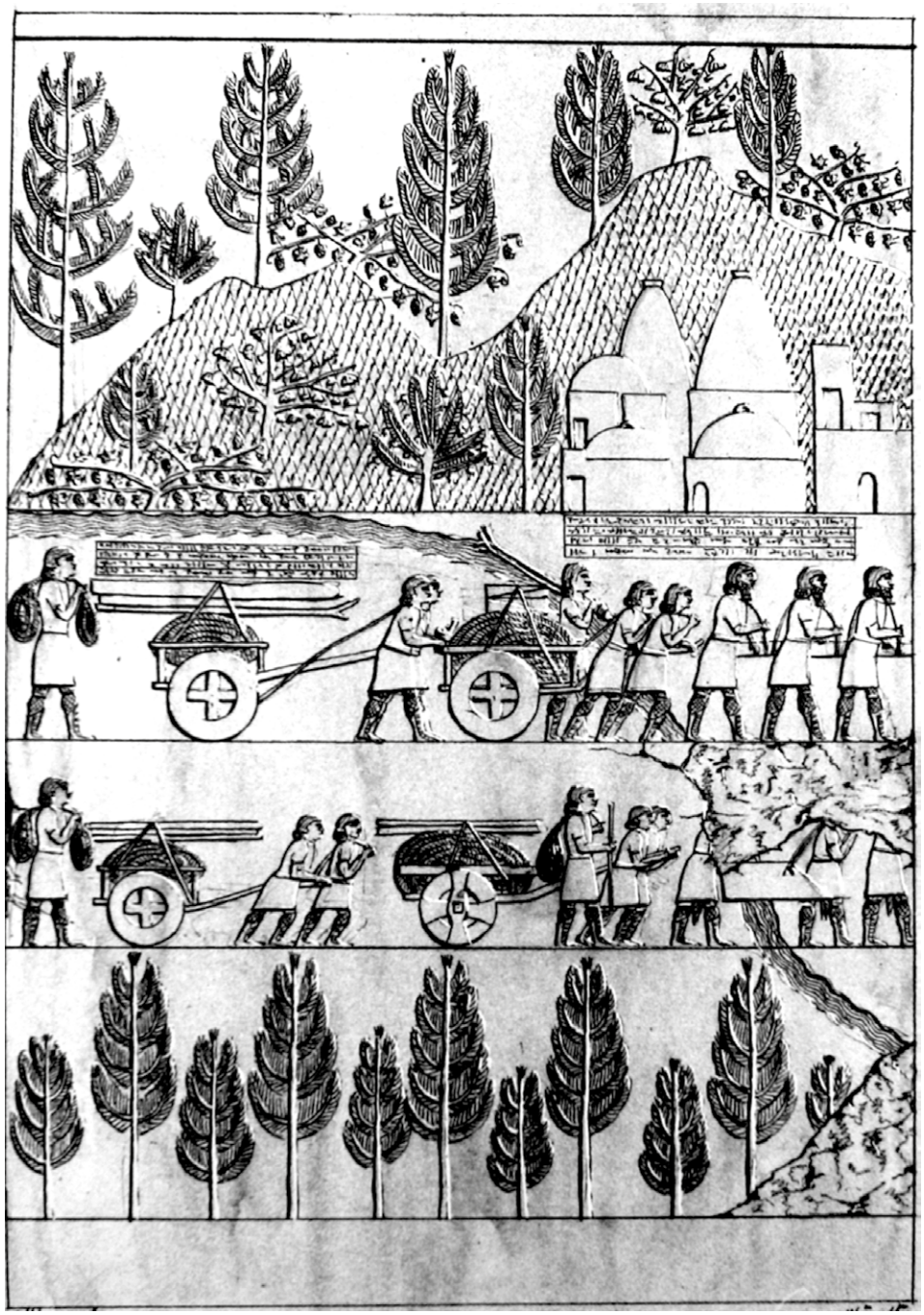

Figure 7. Slab 62 from Court VI (from Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl.110, Or. Dr. IV 51).

with domes seen in the upper part of slab 62 in Court VI (Figure 7), which is known only from a drawing, represent the 'town of Baladeans' (Reade 1978: 58 and fig. 6b, Or.Dr. IV.51, see Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol I: pl. 110). The quarrymen would have found Khinis to have a source of white limestone, and set up their work-station nearby. When Sennacherib referred to the settlement, it would already have been established. As described below, those specialists may have been responsible for the innovation of making polylithic colossi out of white limestone for the Armory on Nebi Yunus.

The white limestone named in Sennacherib's royal inscriptions has not been found in the Southwest Palace on the Kuyunjik citadel. The royal inscriptions specifically mention that the Armory on the Nebi Yunus citadel, built by Sennacherib, had colossi of white limestone. That is where polylithic white limestone bull colossi have been found (Figure 8), as well as the inscribed horse trough (Reade 2017: 446 and 451). The royal inscriptions, mainly describing the Southwest Palace in the sections on non-military achievements, include brief passages that almost certainly refer to Khinis, as argued here.

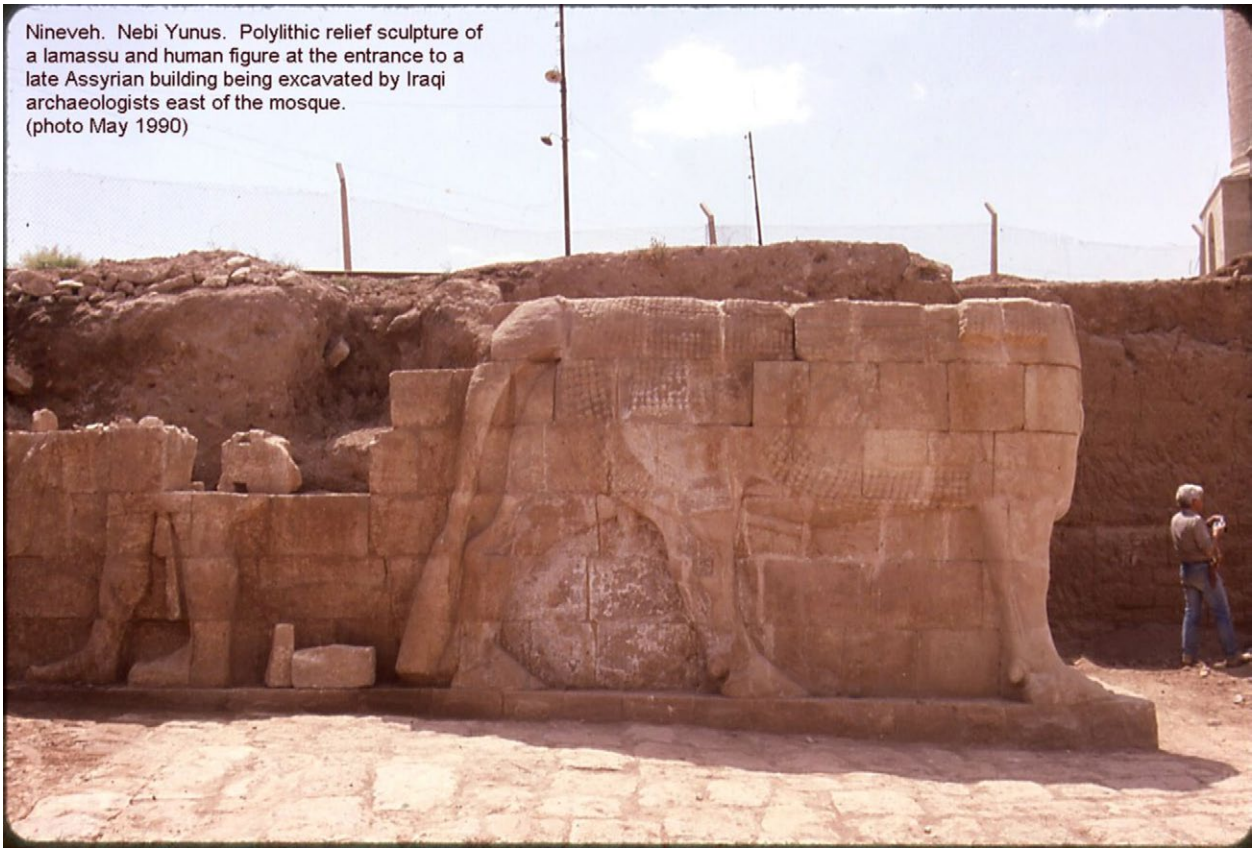
Nineveh. Nebi Yunus. Polylithic relief sculpture of a lamassu and human figure at the entrance to a late Assyrian building being excavated by Iraqi archaeologists east of the mosque.
(photo May 1990)

Figure 8. Polylithic white limestone bull colossus for the Armory on Nebi Yunus citadel.

A Panel of Sculpture in the Southwest Palace showing work at Khinis

Several observations based on sculpture panels, on details of texts in the prism inscriptions of Sennacherib, and on three epigraphs (labels inscribed on panels), suggest that a specific slab in the Southwest Palace shows the sanctuary of Khinis.

Slab 64 found in Court VI (cf. Figure 6 above) (Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol. II: panel 153b (64), pl. 115) depicts the quarry at Khinis with the bollards among the rubble, now recognised from the holes in which they were set along the steep path. The row of 5(?) bollards (see Figure 6b) escaped the notice of the commentary on the panel (Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol I: 64). The panel has no epigraph, but is placed between slabs 60 and 66 which do have Baladāya epigraphs, from which one might deduce that slab 64 shows Khinis too. Reade, writing before the elucidation of all the Baladāya epigraphs, thought that the panel was part of a narrative "indubitable strip-cartoon, with one scene following another against a continuous landscape background... showing the king, again and again, inspecting each stage in the progress of a colossus from the quarry across country to Nineveh", referring to all the quarrying and transporting panels found in Court VI (Reade 1979: 95 and note 84). Russell (1991: 108) was unsure whether a single or various operations were shown; Bleibtreu (in Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol. I: 64) thought different scenes merged to show different phases of moving huge stones to the Southwest Palace. As mentioned above, it is now thought to have been impossible to transport a complete, full-size colossus from Khinis to Nineveh. Full-size colossi such as are being transported across country in slabs 45–47, and 53, which do not have Baladāya epigraphs, do not necessarily represent activity specifically at Khinis. Slab 64 shows the river, presumably the Gomel, running very close to the quarrying, which is a feature particular to Khinis.

Slab 64 represents a particular view of the landscape as if the viewer were standing on the far side of the river looking across towards the quarry to record the scene, just as recent illustrators and photographers have done. A steep path leads down to the left towards the place where the canal first takes water from the river. At the top of the path several bollards are shown amid the rubble at the exit from the quarry area, with the figure of a man tying or untying ropes from them. The land continues to rise up steeply behind the quarry. The sequence of events shows the stage when a huge block had already been detached

Figure 9. Slab 58 showing abrupt change from trees to reeds in the landscape (from Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl.106).

from the quarry and slid down the steep path with help of ropes and bollards. The quarry itself is not shown. The workmen at the bottom of the hill on Slab 66 are already working on a block to "give birth to"[10] the bull colossi and other figures mentioned in some of the inscriptions. This may be the great cube that was levered into place where river water was to be diverted into the canal, still to be seen half in the water at Khinis. It has winged bulls sculpted on its sides. Workmen, toiling back up the slope with bags of stones, are tipping out rubble at the top of the slope, interpreted by Russell (1991: 100–101) as clearing the space on the narrow ground in front of the river for detailed work on the quarried stone block.

Slab 58 is in a badly damaged area (Russell 1991: fig.58 = Barnett *et al.* 1998: vol. I cat. nos. 146–148, BM 124822 "probably Slab 59 or 60", vol. II pl.106) – the numbers are not consistent here. The slab shows a change from trees to a reed background, implying recutting, and has no preserved epigraph (Figure 9). Slab 60 (BM 124824 Russell 1991: fig. 57 = Barnett *et al.* 1998: Slab 61 plate 109) has entirely reeds as well

[10] One may suggest a meaningful play on the words *pēlu* 'egg' and *pīlu / pēlu* "limestone."

Figure 10. Slab 60 showing inappropriate landscape of reeds, Baladaya epigraph, king in his chariot overseeing movement of monolith (from Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl.108–109).

as a Baladaya epigraph; the reeds appear to contradict the background to other quarrying scenes which suggests recutting (Figure 10). Rather than accusing the sculptors of putting the epigraph on the wrong panel, one might suppose that a plan to change the scene on the panels, perhaps to show a place with reeds in Babylonia after the sack of Babylon in 689, could account for the discrepancy; recarving of parts of slabs to bring scenes up-to-date is well known elsewhere (e.g., May 2012; Reade 1983: 41).

The inscriptions

The "Bavian Inscription"

The "Bavian Inscription" is written on at least four stela-shaped rock-cut panels on which a figure of the king is included (Grayson and Novotny 2014: no. 310). It does not mention the quarry, but focusses on the canals, on the orchards and parks that they irrigated around Nineveh from Tarbiṣi to the "town of people from

Ashur", on the religious ceremonies for beginning the work and for ending it, and on the events leading up to the "destruction" of Babylon, with its punishment for treachery in 689 BCE. It can be dated approximately to 688 BCE or later, therefore later than most of the inscriptions on prisms and cylinders which record in detail the work on the Southwest Palace, and were copied or adapted in later years. This may explain why the prisms and cylinders appear to refer to the site at Khinis only in the briefest way: early work was in progress at the time. The new event of the sack of Babylon is mentioned only on the Bavian inscription. Such a major incident would give rise to the recarving to ensure a public record in Sennacherib's main palace, and may account for the awkward transition to a landscape of marshland above the epigraph for *āl Baladāya*.

Inscriptions on prisms[11]

Translations are mainly taken from Grayson and Novotny (2012, 2014).[12] Dates are given from colophons, and do not necessarily refer to the date of the first composition. Identical and nearly identical texts have been combined here. 17 vi 62–79 (694 BCE), duplicates on other prisms. This inscription comes from prisms probably built into one of the gates in the walls of Nineveh (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 140). Note that the translation there leaves a gap after the line on breccia, as if the white limestone belonged with the lines that follow it.

> "In the territory of the town of Baladeans, by divine will, white limestone was discovered in abundance, then I created bull colossi and statues with limbs of alabaster that are sculpted from **a single stone**, (whose) proportions are perfect, (and) who **stand high on their own pedestals**; sphinxes of alabaster whose features are exquisite (and) whose bodies shine like a brilliant day.
>
> (and) magnificent slabs of breccia, I cut (them) free on both sides from their mountains, then, for the construction of my palace, I had (them) dragged into Nineveh.
>
> I had bull colossi and sphinxes of white limestone created and their forms perfected through the craft of the deity Ninkura, in the territory of the town of Baladeans."[13]

Note that "from a single stone" could be translated "on a single stone, on a single block of stone". The last two sentences imply that the colossi were carved in situ; the destination of the limestone sculptures is not given as Nineveh ; only the insert concerning breccia states that colossi of breccia were taken for the palace in Nineveh. "A single stone" may refer to the sculpted cubic monolith to stand at the weir and junction between the river and the new canal.

> "So that the construction of my palace might be carried out correctly and that my handiwork be completed, at that time the god Aššur and the goddess Ištar revealed to me the presence of white limestone in the town of Baladeans. *Therein I quarried mighty mountain sheep colossi, sphinxes, and large stone slabs for the gates of my lordly palace.* In order to prevent the foundation of the terrace from being weakened over the passage of time by cresting flood(s), I surrounded its base with large limestone (*pīlī rabbūti*) blocks and (thereby) reinforced its base." [15 vi 20–27 (697 BCE) and 16 vi 43 (696 and 695 BCE)]

The part of this text, defined here by a double indent in italic, has omitted part of the insert concerning breccia, from no. 17. There would have been no particular difficulty in transporting blocks of limestone big enough for making a foundation. Almost identical wording is found on the man-headed bull- and lion- colossi found at the doorways of court VI of the Southwest Palace in which the panel showing the Khinis quarry was installed; also, at the doorways leading from the throne room (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 57, after Russell 1991).

From the dates on these prism texts, it is clear that work at Khinis was being carried out while the king was building the Southwest Palace.

***Inscriptions about the Armory / Review Palace / Rear Palace,* ekal māšarte / bīt kutalli / ekal kutalli**[14]

The remains of this grand building lie beneath the mosque on the second citadel mound at Nineveh, Nebi Yunus, of which very little has been excavated or recorded.[15] Polylithic colossi of white limestone have been found there, and royal inscriptions state that it was white limestone: 22 vi 39–73a (698 and 691 BCE), 23 vi 40–48 (691 BCE) and 25 ii 3' (no date), 34 55b–77a (no date) and 42 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 21–22). What is known of the building and its sculptures is described by Reade (2017).[16] These inscriptions make

[11] Numbers as in Grayson and Novotny 2012.

[12] With a few adjustments that include: *uru Balâṭai* changed from "city of Balaṭai" to "town of Baladeans."

[13] A variant on the last two lines above, mainly a change in word order: "(As for) the white limestone that was discovered in the territory of the town of Baladeans, I had (it) made into bull colossi and sphinxes, and their forms perfected through the craft of the deity Ninkura."

[14] The palace is specified e.g., in no. 23 vi.31.

[15] Reade 2017; Maul and Miglus 2020: 140 (inscriptions of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal), figs. 10 and 11.

[16] Apart from the panels of sculpture in the ISIS tunnel (Maul and Miglus 2020) which are under study by Mirko Novák.

it clear that the white limestone was used for colossi in that building.

The following translation combines from all three texts.

> "At that time the *ekal kutalli* 'Rear Palace' which is inside Nineveh ... its site had become too small. ... I tore down in its entirety. As an addition I took much land from the meadow and plain of the city. I abandoned the site of the former palace and filled in a terrace in the area that I had taken from lowland and irrigated land. I raised its superstructure 200 courses of brick high.... I had a large palatial wing which greatly surpassed the previous one, [built] for my royal residence. / ... a palatial wing of limestone and cedar in the style of the land Hatti, and(?) a palatial wing of Assyrian workmanship... for my lordly residence ... I had tall bull colossi fashioned (from) white limestone that was discovered in the territory of the town of Baladeans and on the right and left I made (them / it) hold its door bolts...
>
> I had *pendû* -stone – whose appearance is as finely granulated as cucumber seeds ... which was brought from the foot of Mount Nipur, and white limestone which was discovered at the town of Baladeans, fashioned into bull colossi and on the right and left made (them) hold their door bolts. I erected cedar columns over sphinxes of *pendû*-stone and I positioned the architraves (gan.du$_7$) of that palatial hall of limestone (on those columns)."

This is the inscription that specifies that limestone used for colossi in the Armory was white, and came from Khinis. Since some of the polylithic colossi and other pieces of stone found in the Armory have been identified as limestone rather than alabaster or Mosul marble, it implies that blocks of stone were brought down to Nineveh from the quarry and assembled as polyliths at the site of the Armory.

Inscriptions on man-headed bull and lion colossi

None of these are dated, but as in the prism inscriptions, the reference to Khinis is clear as "territory of the town of Baladeans", and the wording is almost identical (Grayson and Novotny 2014: nos. 39:45b–51a; 40:19'', 30''; 42:1'–17'; 43:49b–67a; 44:52b–57a; 46:135b–139a; 47:17', 7''; 49; 50).

Epigraphs on sculptured stone slabs, all undated (Grayson and Novotny 2014: nos. 73 and 74)

Epigraph 73 (on Slab 60 (?) Russell's numbering) (see figure 10 above) (Barnett *et al.* 1998 vol II: no.148b, plate 109, detail with epigraph plate 91, numbered slab 61).

> "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, was joyfully having large bull colossi, which had been fashioned in the territory of the town of Baladeans, dragged to his lordly palace that is inside Nineveh."

The scene on Slab 60 (?) shows the king standing in a chariot overseeing a file of workmen. All figures in front of and behind the king face left. Marsh reeds in landscape shown above. See above for the suggested interpretation that it represents an uncompleted change in the design, with partial recarving.

Epigraphs 74 (Slabs 66 and 68 have same text with minor variants). Barnett *et al.* (1998: plates 116–117 and 119–120) show quarrymen bringing stones or rollers in bags up a hill and emptying them out on top of it. There is no recognisable row of bollards.

> "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria. (With regard to) the white limestone that had been discovered by the will of the gods in the territory of the town of the Baladeans for the construction of my palace, I had the soldiers of enemy settlements and insubmissive troops of the mountains whom I had captured wield iron axes and picks [and] they quarried large bull colossi for the gates of my palace."

In Russell's (1991: 98) placing of the slabs in the Southwest Palace in order:

- Slabs 58, 60 and 62 are on the North wall of Court VI with gaps between them (Figure 11).
- Slabs 63 and 64 are on the East wall with no gaps between them, before the first doorway.
- Slab 64 (Barnett *et al.* 1998: vol. II plates 113 drawing and 115 photo) is the one showing the bollards.
- Slab 65 may show the king watching the scene of the "single stone" carved with bull-men and others being levered into position on a sledge at the beginning of the canal with men standing on it to direct the operation.
- Slabs 66, 67, 68 continue on the East wall of the court, with thin gaps between them, after the first doorway.

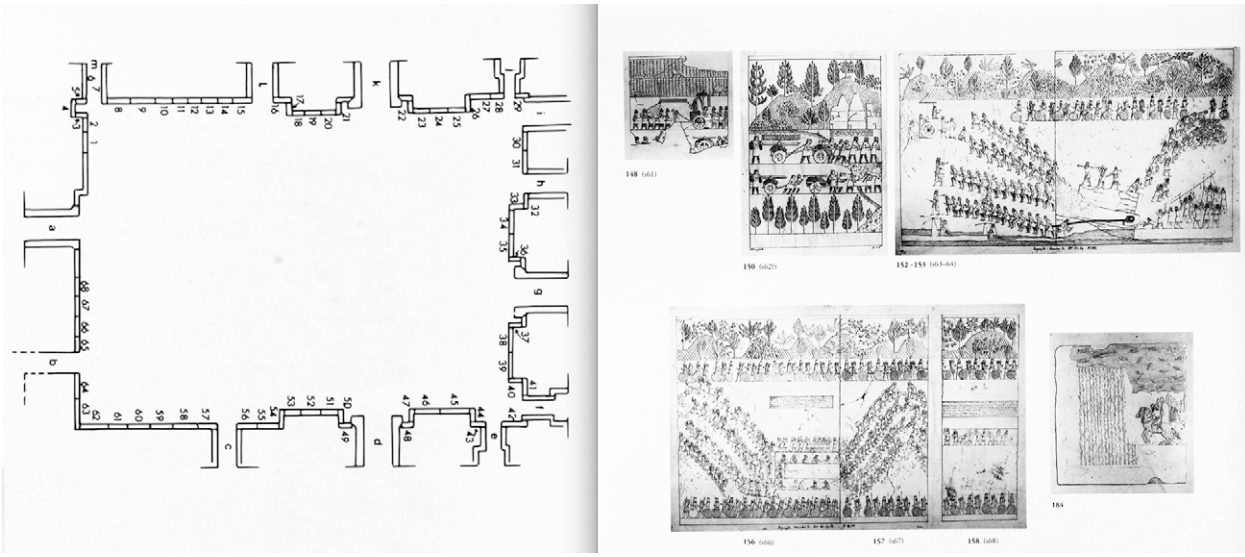

Figure 11. Plan of Court VI with location of relief slabs, adapted using Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl.79 and part of pl.77.

Clay tablet (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 207 no.151)

151 obv.i', 8b–12. Damaged readings restored from other texts.

> "So that the construction of my palace might be carried out correctly and that my handiwork be completed, at that time, the god Aššur and the goddess Ištar revealed to me the presence of white limestone in the town of Baladeans ..."

Reconstruction of events

A sequence can be suggested from which the various passages mentioning white limestone, as follows:

Sennacherib planned and executed his Southwest Palace at a time when the disaster of trying to obtain white limestone from Tastiate obliged him to use the more local supplies of alabaster and "Mosul marble" for colossi in that palace, beginning soon after his accession in 704, ending with completion of that palace around 691 (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 17). Meanwhile the quarry of white limestone was discovered at Khinis and a workers' settlement from Balad (Eski Mosul) for quarrying had been established. Their expertise began to be used in close co-operation with planning the diversion of water from the Gomel river, for which the sculptured cube of white limestone that diverted river water into the new canal at Khinis was the most crucial element, and for the stones used in the Jerwan aqueduct. During the reign of Sargon, when the level of water in the Tigris subsided after the spate of Spring, the stranded colossus from Tastiate limestone had been, I suggest, cut into small blocks so that the landing stage could be unblocked. From it the idea arose, when work began on the Armory Palace, to manufacture polyliths. The blocks were used to copy (or inspire?) the reliefs at Babylon of bulls, lions and dragons which were made from moulds as a panel of brick, on a much smaller scale than the Assyrian colossi. Note that it is not possible to date the several levels of the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way at Babylon with the brick relief panels that preceded the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (Pedersén 2021: 77).

None of the royal inscriptions mentions specifically that white limestone was used for colossi for the Southwest Palace. On the prism inscriptions, the scribes referred very briefly to work at Khinis, as an analysis of the relevant passages, given below, reveals. On inscriptions relating to the Armory, white limestone is specified.

The discovery at the Armory of polylithic colossi, smaller than the monoliths, raises the question of why and how they were produced. A template would have been required for each individual stone, such as could be produced by cutting up a complete, carved monolith into blocks. Reade (2017: 453–455 and fig. 26) suggests that dovetail joints held the pieces of polyliths together, and mentions that some were found unfinished and uninscribed, whether by Sennacherib himself or by his successors Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal who also worked on the building. He suggests that the innovation was not successful enough to persist.

A boundary marker against Urartu

None of the royal inscriptions of Sennacherib mention Urartu, the rival kingdom against which his father had campaigned, ending with the treasures taken from the temple of Haldi at Muṣaṣir, with a single exception: the *Bavian Inscription.* Written soon after the recapture of

Babylon, it is surprising that it indicates one area of water supply and canal work, in the vicinity of Khorsabad, referring to the work initiated by Sargon.

> "From the border of the town Kisiri[17] to Nineveh ... [I directed] to my land the mass of those water from Mount Tas, a rugged mountain in the vicinity of the land Urarṭu." (Grayson and Novotny 2014: 313, no. 223: 11b–13a).

This statement belongs to a long-established tradition: to include in royal inscriptions a concept in which geographical boundaries are indicated in a schematic way. Already in the third millennium the scheme is found, for instance in the royal inscriptions of Eanatum, king of Lagash, where the borders of Gu-edina transgressed by neighbouring Umma, are restored to the king's control, inscribed on the Stele of the Vultures. The key Sumerian term ki.sur used in that inscription was loaned into Akkadian as *kisurru / kisurrû* "border, territory" (Rey 2016: 60). As Neo-Assyrian *kisir(r)i* in the genitive following āl "town", vowel harmony would have altered the middle vowel to *-i-*. The Tigris Tunnel inscriptions with the king's image likewise use the location as a source of water to indicate in a schematic way the north-western limit of Assyrian control.[18] This raises the question whether *āl kisīri / kisirri* might be translated "the town of the border." As a Sumerian loanword it would have carried the prestige of archaic usage. This may be preferable to the etymology proposed by Jacobsen (1935: 33 no. 12).[19] Radner (2012: 245–246) has argued plausibly that the name Muṣaṣir may be derived from Akkadian *miṣru / muṣru* "border, boundary." It can be compared with Mt. Muṣri, a name for Jebel Bashiqah northeast of Khorsabad which can be interpreted as "the border mountain." The mountain Tas is also thought to lie to the north of Khorsabad, part of the chain to which Mt Andaruttu belongs (Bagg 2017: s.v.), forming a watershed for tributaries flowing towards the plain of Khorsabad and Nineveh. Thus, there is a cluster of words for borders in the province of borderlands administered by the Palace Herald, linked to Sargon's new city at Khorsabad. If one now accepts the location of Muṣaṣir at modern Mudjesir,[20] the claim in the Bavian inscription that water in the canals leading to Nineveh flowed from the border of Urartu indicates the strategic importance of guarding against incursions that might interfere with the great canal works in the plain, and the provisioning of the great Assyrian capitals.

Although there are many letters mentioning Urartu written by Sennacherib as crown prince, none have been attributed to his reign. Most correspondence of high officials to the king address the king only as "my lord" when the opening lines are preserved, which they often are not. It has long been supposed that the letters that were written to Sennacherib as king have not been discovered (Frahm 1997: 4–5), with the exception of those written from Babylonia (Dietrich 2003: xix–xx). His father's engagement with Urartu is so well known from the famous Letter to the Gods that letters to "my lord" that mention Urartu, written by officers, are mainly assigned to Sargon's reign (Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990: xv–xix). But some of those officers presumably still served after Sargon's unexpected death. The absence of letters is part of a much wider problem with assessing Sennacherib's reign. The Bavian inscription suggests that defence against Urartu continued to be a priority during the reign of Sennacherib, some 24 years after the sack of Muṣaṣir.

The border province to the northeast of Khinis, administered by the Palace Herald, *nāgir ekalli*, covered most or all of the ranges of mountains that separate the plains of Nineveh from Muṣaṣir and the route to Lake Urmia and Armenia. According to the archaeological remains of a non-Urartian type of temple,[21] Muṣaṣir was thus near the edge of Assyrian provincial territory. A longstanding but intermittent subservience to Assyria is indicated by references to the city's capture and subjugation in the 14th century BCE, twice in the 13th century, in the 12th century, and in the 9th century by the presence of its delegate at the Assyrian court of Ashurnaṣirpal II. The discovery of two royal Urartian stelae in the modern province of Erbil shows that control of the territory was sometimes contested successfully by Urartu.[22]

The ruler of Muṣaṣir at the time of Sargon's conquest was Urzana, who was at first subservient to Rusa son of Sarduri the Urartian king. When Rusa fled from Sargon's troops and had to face Cimmerian incursions from the north, Urzana changed his loyalty and served Assyria. His famous amuletic seal, inscribed in Akkadian not Urartian, confirms his commitment to Assyria as a client king under the aegis of the Palace Herald after 714. It describes his city Muṣaṣir as "city of the crow" (UGA.MUŠEN). It may be no coincidence that the herald of the gods, was the crow or raven, according to the series of incantations against the malevolent dead, *Utukki Lemnūti*.[23] Was the

[17] It is marked at Tell Inthah in the Helsinki Atlas, Parpola and Porter 2001: map 28.

[18] Grayson (1996: 95): "I subdued (the territory stretching) from the source of the Tigris to the source of the Euphrates, from the sea of the Interior of the land Zamua to the sea of Chaldaea" discussed by Radner in Schachner 2009: 199. In my opinion, the image of the king can be very faintly discerned on the photo Abb. 194 in that volume.

[19] A nominal form from an Akkadian root KSR *pirīs / piriss is not attested in von Soden 1956: §55.

[20] Following e.g. Boehmer1993–1997; Radner 2012; Grayson and Novotny 2014: 273–274; Roaf 2012: 209 re the Eponym Chronicle for 713.

[21] Boehmer 1993-1997: 448 Abb 2.

[22] Radner 2012: 248, quoting also Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990: 136.

[23] See *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* A vol. II: *aribu* (CT 16: no. 28: lines 64–65).

epithet "city of the crow" introduced on the seal to flaunt Urzana's loyalty to the Palace Herald?

Sennacherib's aim in naming a border city and Urartu in his rock inscriptions at Khinis can be understood as a reference to his father's triumph at Muṣaṣir and to his own success in keeping the loyalty of Urzana its ruler. The statue of Ishtar of Nineveh on her lion throne, if correctly identified, would signal the power of Assyria near the border of Urartu, and the site itself as using water that was threatened because Urartians were close enough to divert it. Sennacherib thus proclaimed his role as protector from Urartian predations, including the water supply for his expanded plantations in the plain of Nineveh, under the aegis of Ištar of Nineveh.

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Chapter 19:
Akhenaten's divine crop

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Abstract. Egyptian King Amenhotep IV-Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BCE) had reliefs carved on his monuments depicting him (and his Queen) performing a ritual involving sheaves of grain. This is the first case of a Harvesting King motif being represented on murals in a ceremonial context. It has been suggested that the ritual was related to the Festival of Min, during which Pharaoh cut a sheaf of grain, a view that is discussed together with an alternative proposal.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, Akhenaten, Amarna, iconography, harvesting king.

Many of our conversations over the last years have been about the iconography of Akhenaten, so I dedicate the King's rich crop to Tallay Ornan, in homage to her profound knowledge of all things divine, and above all, to the uniqueness of her unwavering friendship.

Among the large number of reliefs carved during the reign of Amenhotep IV–Akhenaten (ca. 1350 BCE) that have survived the test of time, a few concern the King harvesting or holding a sheaf of grain. These reliefs have not been extensively discussed, but it has been suggested that they relate to the Festival of Min (Cooney 1965: 10, 13; Aldred 1973: 193), the *prt Mnw* "Going forth of Min" (celebrated in the first month of summer–I *šmw* during the reigns of Ramses II and III,[1] thus in the harvest season), during which the King performed the ritual cutting of a grain sheaf (*ȝsḫ it*/ *bdt*) with an *isḫ*-sickle. After Year 5 of Akhenaten's reign, no official ceremony involved gods other than Aten, but this of course does not imply that Akhenaten could not "recycle" ancient symbolic performances for his own purposes and in accordance with his own rules. Alternatively, Akhenaten may have been inspired by a ritual not associated with Min.

The grain harvest began in February–March, lending itself, during Dynasty 18, to a hypothetical royal participation in a "first fruit" harvest (*tp n šmw*),[2] although this event has never been clearly attested. The harvest ended around May (for emmer,[3] a type of wheat, see Krauss 1993), with at least three full months during which some symbolic royal performance may have been associated with the crop. Unfortunately, Akhenaten did not leave any direct textual evidence of such a reaping ritual and the enigmatic reliefs remain its only testimony. Of the festivals celebrated during Akhenaten's reign at Karnak (the royal jubilee) and Amarna (see the tribute event in Davies 1905a: pl. 37; 1905b: pls. 13–15; the birthday of Aten, festivals of eternity, etc. in Pendlebury 1951: pl. 91), none left any tangible trace of a royal reaping ritual.

The scant evidence of a royal harvest must be re-examined in order to ensure that both the rituals and their depiction were indeed related to the reaping of grain.

Karnak, Years 4–6 of the reign[4]

What is purported to be the earliest evidence comes from an unspecified monument in the Atenist complex in East Karnak (*Atenism* being the new politico-religious doctrine, based on the belief in the unique god Aten as professed by the King). Assemblage A0075 is a series of reliefs on standardised sandstone blocks (*talatat,* ca. 52 × 26 × 22 cm and 50–55 kg) that were excavated from the Ninth Pylon and reassembled by Robert Vergnieux (1999: 128, pl. 17b) (Figure 1).

The large figure of the King stands under Aten's rays (the iconography of the god since Year 4) conferring life and dominion upon him. Fully clothed in fine plissé shawl and kilt, he wears the cartouches of Aten on his wrist and collared breast (and a lost crown with a streamer flowing behind his neck). The King is loosely holding four curving bands interpreted by Vergnieux as sheaves of grain in his extended left hand, either

[1] In accordance with the Medinet Habu Calendar. See Gauthier 1931: 41; Parker 1950: 39–40 §§ 203–204; Krauss 1985: 143.

[2] The Egyptian [*tp n* + noun] concerns a unit in a group, the unit being either superior ("first/best of") or similar to ("specimen of") the other units in the group (David 2006: 42–43 no. 67). Thus, the translation of *tp n šmw* might be "sample of the crop." On the "first fruit of the harvest", see Gilula 1974; Te Velde 1977: 1. The reference to *tp šmw* in the context of the measuring of myrrh by Hatshepsut is not relevant here (Naville 1898: pl. 82 line 2; *Urk.* IV, 339 line 9).

[3] Apparently, only barley (*it*) and emmer (*bdt*, see Schoske, Kreißl and Germer 1992: 15) were consumed in Amarna (Kemp 2012: 218).

[4] The King's construction works in Karnak ended around Year 6, the *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the assemblage. I am grateful for Robert Vergnieux and Marianne Eaton-Krauss' views on the assemblage and Vergnieux's authorisation to republish it.

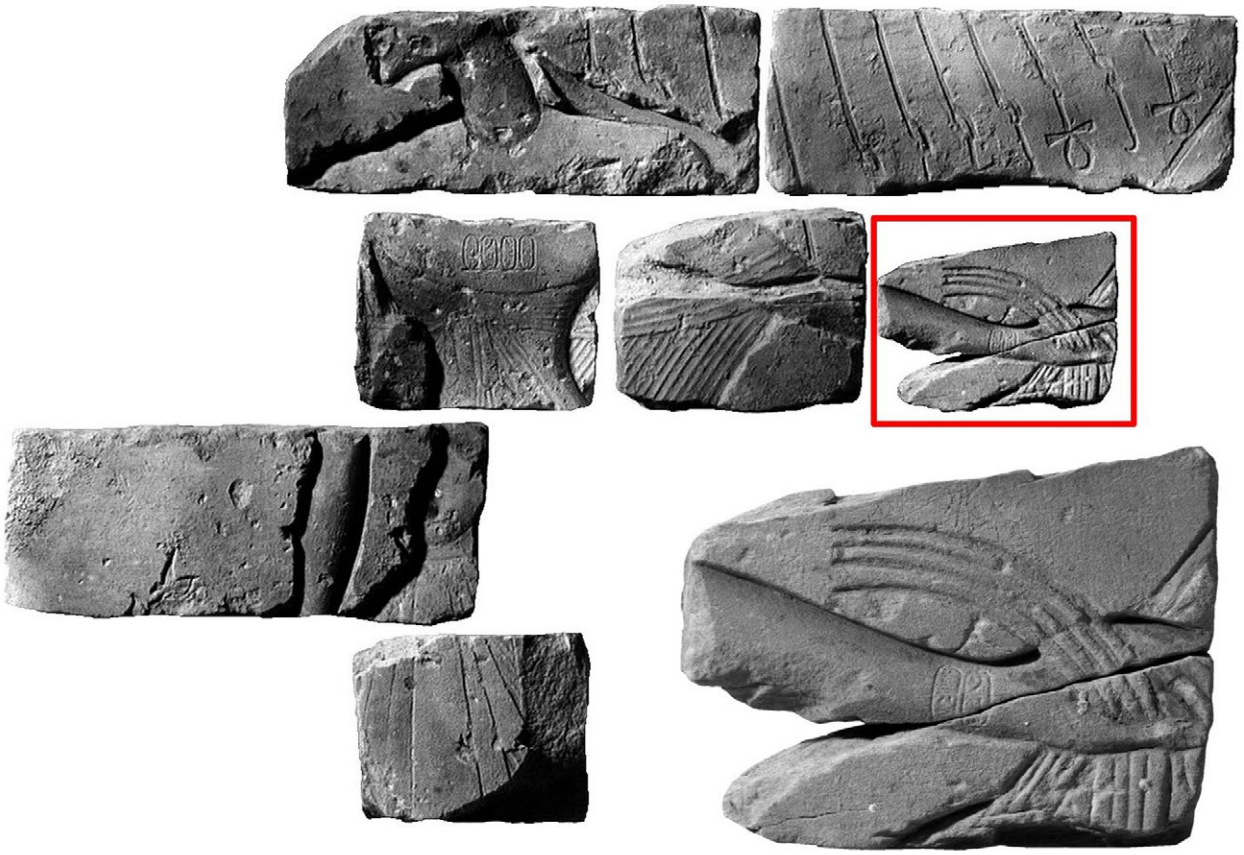

Figure 1. Karnak *talatat*, Assemblage A0075 after Vergnieux (1999: 128, pl. 17b) © photographs CNRS-CFEETK / R. Vergnieux-A. Bellod.

by his side or behind him, without looking at them. This interpretation was suggested by the "spikelets" of a second sheaf, visible on the lower part of *talatat* 28–775 (enlarged in the lower right-hand corner of Figure 1). The other hand is lost. Vergnieux remarked that the King was probably preceded by a man holding a burning censer (traces of flames) and followed by Queen Nefertiti basking under a second, differently oriented, set of Aten's rays. The fragmentary scene does not allude to the King's cutting of the sheaf. Except for the divine cartouches inscribed on the King's body, no text is preserved on the *talatat*.

As suggested by Eaton-Krauss (2002: 104), the King's posture recalls scenes, for example involving Seti I (Weeks 1986: pl. 4) or Akhenaten (Davies 1906: pl. 22), in which the King holds the reins of his horses while turning to look in the opposite direction. In these cases however, he has a tight grip on the reins, with only the downward loop of the reins near his hand and nothing resembling an ear of grain or braided implement (see below).

Fortunately, the piece that joins the back of Akhenaten and the rear part of his chariot has been preserved (*talatat* 35–111).[5] The King is not grasping the four ends of the reins because he is handing them to his charioteer. A similar motif is depicted in the large Marle–Chappaz assemblage from the décor of the *Rwḏ-mnw* monument in East Karnak (Years 4–5): the charioteer is cupping his hands high to take the reins from the King and the four ends of the reins appear on a large block above.[6] The motif is identical in Assemblage A0075; one must assume that the "spikelets" are either part of the loop of reins in the royal hand or of the upper railing of the chariot. Thus, we have here a new royal motif, comparable to"handing over the car keys to the valet" in modern times, quite unrelated to harvests or grain (Figure 2).

[5] Robert Vergnieux (private communication) confirmed my suggestion and the piece fits perfectly.

[6] Although an unrelated *talatat* had been placed between his hands and the ends of the reins. See Chappaz 1985: 92 scene I, 3.

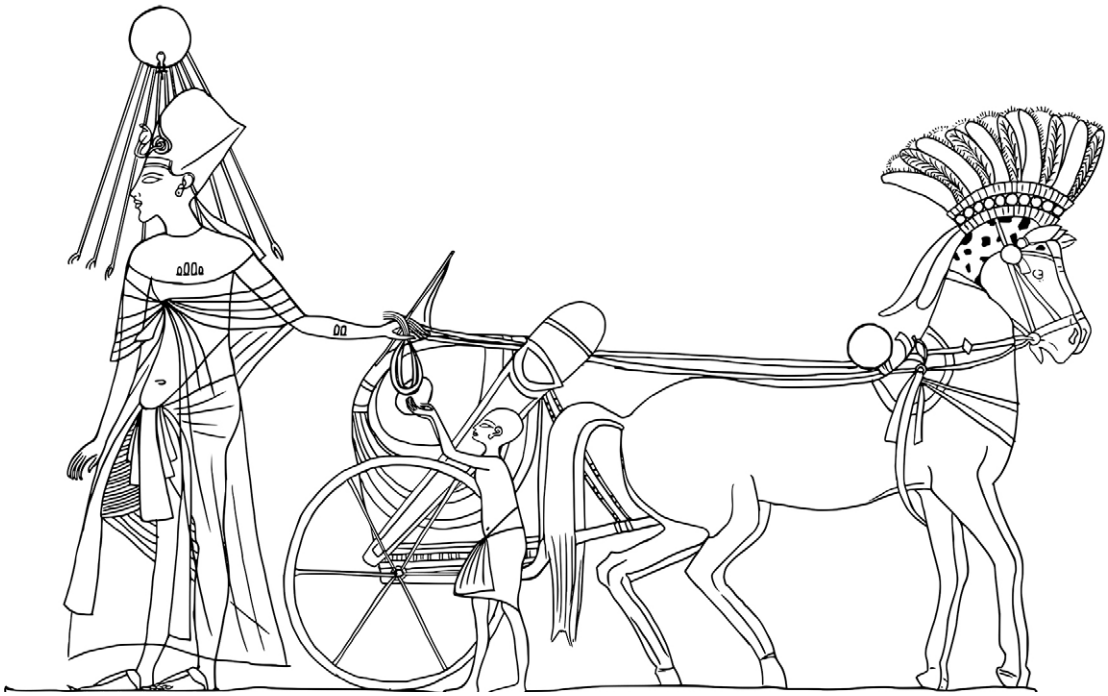

Figure 2. Reconstruction of the motif of Assemblage A0075, Zhenxiao Zhao's graphics © Arlette David.

Amarna, Years 6–17 of the reign

Three limestone *talatat*, "sliced" from the original blocks and probably re-coloured in modern times, were apparently discovered in Hermopolis, having been taken from unspecified monument(s) dismantled in Amarna. They may not belong to a single tableau. A further limestone column fragment and a limestone block were excavated in Amarna.

On the first *talatat* (Figure 3, *talatat* Richmond VMFA 61.4, ca. 22.8 × 44.4 × 3.8 cm, restored and repainted), Akhenaten is wearing his blue (default) crown, the *ḫprš* that marks him as the solar son and heir of Aten (David 2021: 195–196 with references). Streamers flutter behind his shoulders, there are no visible body-cartouches of his God (perhaps they were scratched off his arms/chest) and he wears no shawl, but there are traces of a painted collar and perhaps of a sash kilt. Aten's rays are invisible and no ankh-sign is held up by the God to the King's nose. On the right-hand side of the *talatat*, a red arm almost touching the King's back may belong to the Queen.

The King's deeply bowed posture, arms active and eyes on the task, is totally different from when he drives a chariot (*contra* Roeder 1969: 165, 281, pl. 172 PC 21). On the chariot, the King's status is highlighted by his upright position, contrasting with the horses' wild rearing motion (David 2021: 269–270). Cooney identified "strands of wheat" on the lower left-hand side of the block, painted blue in modern times (Cooney 1965: 10), and suggested that it depicted the King reaping grain, as Ramesside Kings did for the Festival of Min (e.g. Ramses II at the Ramesseum in Nelson 1940: pl. 214 and at Karnak in Nelson 1940: pl. 215 C/D and 1981: pl. 28; Ramses III at Medinet Habu in Nelson 1940: pls. 205–206; Figure 4). Nevertheless, in the latter reliefs, the King never bends to his task as does Akhenaten, and the activity does not take place in the fields, for it is a symbolic act performed in the temple.

The departure from the traditional axial stance in favour of a more natural performance of a practical gesture is of course not unknown in Atenist iconography, even in the early days of the reign at Karnak (e.g. the King using a mallet in Smith and Redford 1976: pl. 18 no. 6). If the King is holding a sickle, he should be gripping it with his right hand (prototypical right-hand dominance), but if he is facing left, this preference might be overruled in order to bring the sickle to the foreground. In fact, a rather similar stance is adopted by the King at the window of appearance in Amarna (Davies 1903: pl. 6; 1905b: pl. 17); if the traces on the left are not grain spikelets, a window scene remains a plausible alternative.

Figure 3. Amarna *talatat* Richmond VMFA 61.4 © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Figure 4. Ramses III in Medinet Habu after Nelson (1940: pl. 205), courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Figure 5. Amarna *talatat*, courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 60.197.2 (Photo: Brooklyn Museum, CUR.60.197.2_wwg7.jpg) Copyright © 2004–2009 the Brooklyn Museum.

Figure 6. Amarna *talatat* MMA 1985.328.24, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The next *talatat* (Figure 5, Brooklyn Museum 60.197.2, ca. 23.4 × 52 cm) shows an even larger, probably royal figure, holding a sheaf of grain in the right hand. The figure wears a wig with a pointed lappet and no suggestion of feathering. There is no streamer behind the neck, no neck folds, no trace of earrings, no collar, bracelets or body-cartouches on the skin. Aten's hands are invisible, but the damage in front of the nose and mouth may be caused by the intention to deprive a member of the royal family of Aten's life-force. On the basis of Cooney's indication of a Min festival, Aldred (1973: 193 no. 125) suggested that the relief might belong to a coronation scene of Akhenaten's successor, Smenkhkare, accompanied by his consort Merytaten, Akhenaten's eldest daughter; however nothing supports such a theory. Based on the submandibular and chin lines, the figure is not Akhenaten. It may be a woman (*contra* Cooney 1965: 13 no. 6; Roeder 1969: 160, pl. 173 PC 26) belonging to the royal family given her large size. The absence of a streamer under the wig is compatible with Nefertiti[7] and Kiya, Akhenaten's secondary wife. A fingertip is visible on the left side of the *talatat* amidst the sheaves, perhaps the King's, since the woman's left forearm would have cut across the right arm if it was held up in such a way. The larger size of the figure precludes a direct link to the Richmond *talatat*.

The third *talatat* (Figure 6, MMA 1985.328.24, ca. 23.6 × 52.9 × 4.6 cm) has a raised relief of ripe ears of grain on one side, probably barley. Cooney (1965: 96 no. 57) suggested that this might be part of the tableau of Akhenaten reaping on the Richmond *talat at* VMFA 61.4 (Figure 3).

[7] Ertman 1995: 111. Compare with Nefertiti, e.g. Roeder (1969: pl.4 482–VII) and Kiya (Ny Carlsberg AEIN 1776, Johnson 2015: 297 fig. 2).

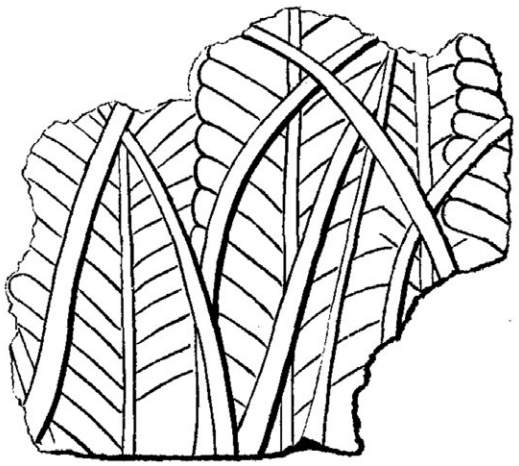

Figure 7. Amarna column fragment after Petrie (1894: pl. 7 No. 4), courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

Such decor is "unknown in royal or temple architecture except during the Amarna Period" for Roehrig and Hill (1992: 32). Nevertheless, Old Kingdom royal temples, e.g. the Abusir mortuary temple of Niuserra (Borchardt 1907: 38 fig. 17), have small harvesting scenes, and fragments of reliefs from the temple of Ahmose at Abydos (Dynasty 18) depict "the cutting of grain and indications of landscape" (Harvey 1998: 339 and fig. 82).

A plant motif carved in relief on a fragment of column, found by Petrie in Amarna at the Great Palace in the Central City, was thought by Cooney (1965: 96) to be another example of grain ears, but this identification remains dubious (Figure 7).

Finally, a limestone block (Figure 8, Cairo JE 65953, ca. 21 × 30 cm) discovered in Amarna, again at the site of the

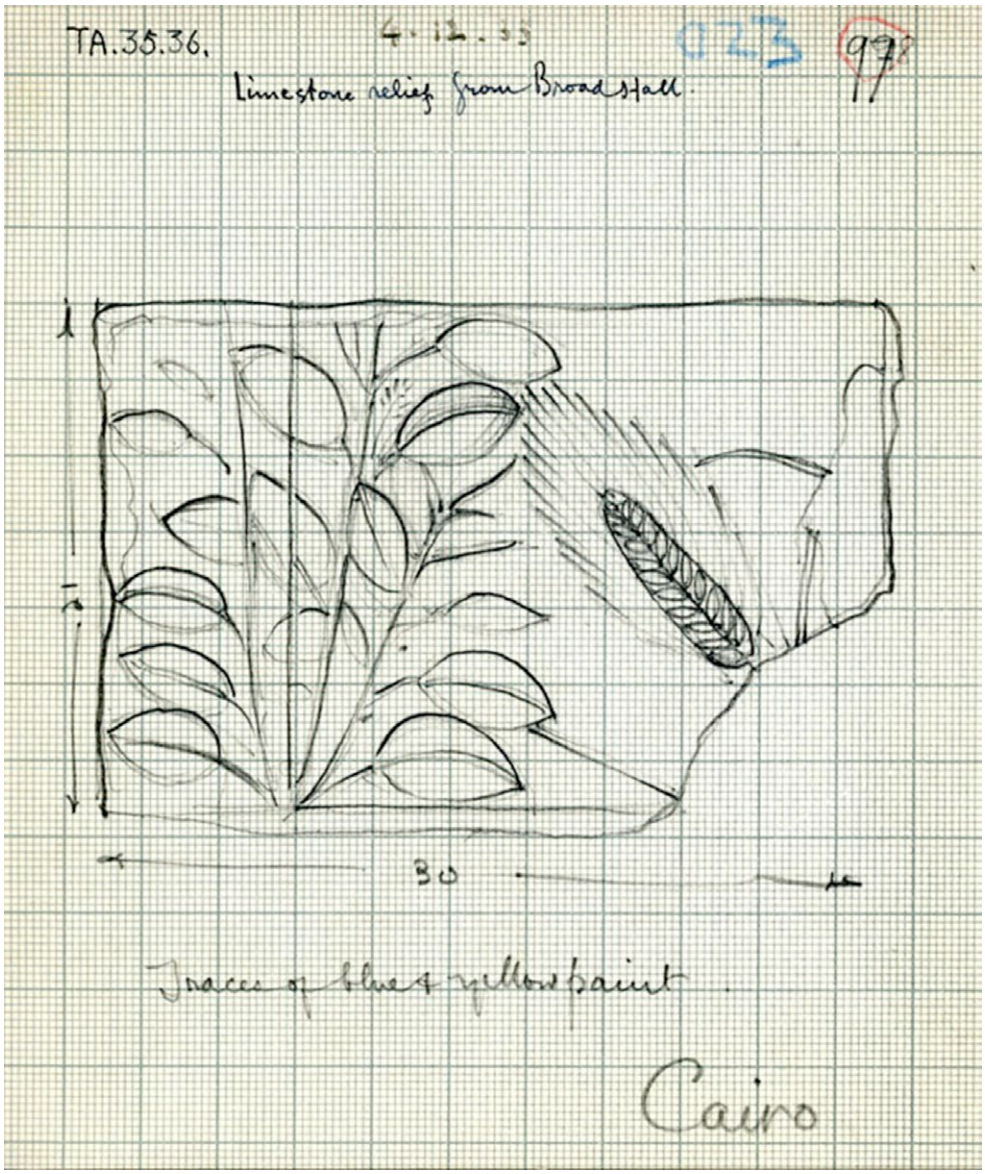

Figure 8. Amarna block after EES card 023/97, courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

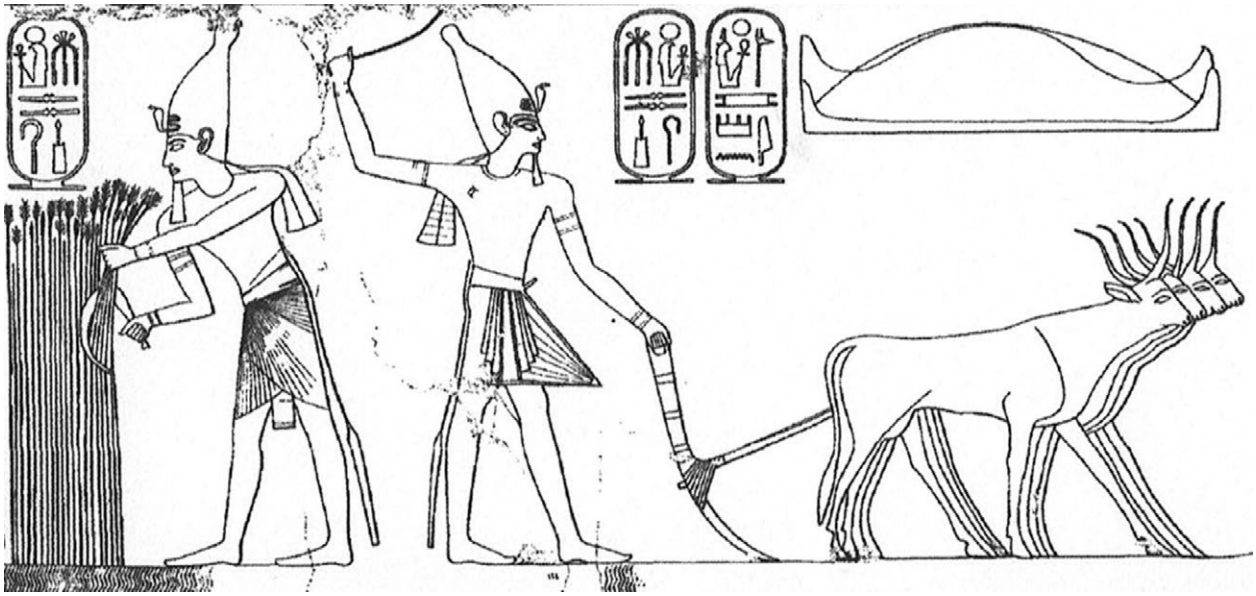

Figure 9. Ramses III in Medinet Habu after Hughes (1963: pl. 469), courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Great Palace,[8] is carved with leafy stalks on the left and an ear of wheat on the right. The association of various plants does not suggest a harvest scene, but rather a plant-based motif, perhaps around a pool. The relief was depicted on Amarna EES object card TA.OC.35–36.097 (Figure 8).[9]

The Reaping King

The assumption that Akhenaten was involved in a Festival of Min ritual related to coronation (Cooney 1965: 10 no. 5; Aldred 1973: 193 no. 125) arose in connection with Theban temple reliefs, dated to a period later than Akhenaten's reign but linked to this festival, which were once thought to be the earliest depictions of a king holding a sickle and grain sheaves. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, they depict a rigidly standing king pretending to cut a sheaf in the temple premises, quite different from the stance and assumed location of Akhenaten. The Min Festival described by Gauthier (1931) and Bleeker (1956) involved a series of rituals (royal procession, royal offering, divine procession, release of four birds, sheaf cutting, incense burning and libation) proclaiming the renewal of kingship and the king's potency (Moens 1985: 72), associated with the slaying of enemies (Te Velde 1977: 2; Lurson 2005: 117). Although the queen is present at the Ramesside Min Festival, her participation is limited, and she is not depicted touching the grain.

In the surviving repertoire of royal images, Akhenaten is probably the first King depicted reaping grain, a new iconographic motif developed by his artists; Ramesside Kings may have taken their inspiration from this for the temple décors related to the Min Festival.

Besides this rather tenuous visual association with the festival of Min, another very ancient theme, depicted in the royal mortuary complex of Medinet Habu (Figure 9) and illustrating chapter 110 of the Book of the Dead (*BD*) may be related to Akhenaten's motif. The deceased Ramses III is presented working in the Field of the Afterlife (*sḫt iȝrw*, the Field of Rushes) looking for provisions, ploughing and reaping grain (*ȝsḫ*)[10] in a way that is closer to Akhenaten's stance and assumed environment on *talatat* Richmond VMFA 61.4.

The depictions in Medinet Habu and *BD* 110 have their origin in an ancient Heliopolitan tradition, expressed textually in the *Pyramid Texts* (*PT*) as early as Dynasty 6, ca. 2300 BCE. This tradition impacted all later theological avatars, including those associated with the "new solar theology" that emerged during Amenhotep III's reign and shaped Akhenaten's beliefs (Assmann 1995: 9–10, 156). Indeed, *PT* Spell 461 §§ 873d–874a (Allen 2013) proclaims "May you take the oar to the Field of Rushes, that you might cultivate barley and reap emmer (...) like Horus, son of Atum" (*iṯ.k ḥpt r sḫt iȝrw skȝ.k it ȝsḫ.k bdt*

[8] Pendlebury 1951: 66, pl. 68 no. 7, in the Broad Hall "from the central pavilion westwards", with an unclear picture based on a damaged EES negative (TA.NEG.35-36.O.023): https://www.flickr.com/photos/egyptexplorationsociety/38195853364/in/album-72157688151778592/

[9] https://www.flickr.com/photos/egyptexplorationsociety/18236068384/in/album-72157654221761359/

[10] For an example of this around the time of Thutmose IV 's reign, see pBM EA 9900, *BD* of Nebseny in https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA9900-18.

(…) *mi ḥr sꜣ tm*). The king acts as the son and heir of the old sun-god, kingship being ideally transmitted by the father to his eldest son (hereditary male primogeniture). This is the model on which Akhenaten established his Atenist revolution: Akhenaten is the perfect son of Aten and, following Heliopolitan cosmogony (*PT* Spell 205 § 121a), "it is the sun who gave barley, bread, and beer to him [the king]" (*in rᶜ rdi n.f it t ḥnḳt*) so that the king could be responsible for Egypt's sustenance. The same nature-lives-thanks-to-the-sun leitmotiv features in the hymns to Aten and the iconography at Karnak and Amarna. Furthermore, the duties of the eldest son towards his father include providing for him with an allowance in his old age (as his successor in office and provider of the family) and the performance of the ancestor/mortuary ritual when he dies. The same duties are imposed on the king in the *Pyramid Texts*: the deceased king's son should take up his father's duties, as commanded by the great sun-god, "he should cultivate barley, he should cultivate emmer" and offer them to his deceased father (*PT* Spell 422 § 761). Although the few Atenist reliefs relating to grain were not part of a funerary context, they involve concepts that are at the core of Akhenaten's solar devotion, and as such they have their place in ceremonial environments.

The *King as Provider* is a theme that pervades Egyptian literature and imagery, as seen in statues presenting the king as the bearer of a variety of produce, including cereals. Particularly eloquent is Cairo CG 550, a granite statue of Akhenaten's father, Amenhotep III, from Karnak (Borchardt 1925: pl. 92): on the offering table/tray there are bundles of ears, while grain stalks stand in front, up to the height of the table.[11]

These beliefs may have been compounded with official and popular celebrations, such as the important New Kingdom Theban festival, celebrated on the first day of the first month of *šmw* ("harvest", summer). This was the festival of the cobra goddess Renenutet,[12] patron of granaries (Mougenot 2014: 156–159) who nursed (*rnn* "to nurse") the corn-god Neper, born that day.[13] During this harvest festival, grain and grapes were offered to Renenutet and to the local god, Amun in Thebes (Te Velde 1977: 3). The festival was familiar to Akhenaten, who spent time in the Theban region in his youth and early reign.[14] In an agriculture-based society, harvest festivals were important enough to prevent their complete prohibition by Akhenaten, and they subsisted in some form, although probably without direct reference to gods other than Aten when celebrated under the King's patronage. Akhenaten may have aggregated various rituals, ideas, and images surrounding harvests and/or cereal offerings[15] in order to create new celebrations and rituals devoted to his god.

Akhenaten scrupulously fulfilled his obligations to the cult of Aten, his divine father, presenting him with the best offerings, *elevating* them to the god's rays for an *illumination* by which Aten manifested his reception of these gifts (David 2021: 208). Some unique natural products were elevated by the King in this way, besides more common staples (David 2021: 203–204), for instance olive branches heavy with fruit[16] (MMA 1981.449 in Roeder 1969: pl. 170 PC1; Roehrig and Hill 1992: 26–27) and live pintail ducks, belly up (MMA 1985.328.2 and Ny Carlsberg AEIN 1776 in Johnson 2015). Although pintail ducks were considered a delicacy and a revival omen, they were also symbols of the enemy, and they appear in net-trapping (Schott 1956: 181–189; David 2014: 246) and stick-hunting scenes.[17] Their "throttling", to use Raymond Johnson's evocative expression, by Akhenaten in front of his secondary spouse Kiya suggests a connotation that is also present in the cropping ritual, often seen as the felling of the enemy.

Curiously, depictions of a *Reaping King* are not attested outside Egypt in the Bronze Age, even in cases where rulers performed agricultural rituals.[18] For example, the Mesopotamian "Priest-King" is depicted feeding the sacred herd of the temple with cereals,[19] possibly alluding to a harvest ritual (Ziffer 2002: 11). The ancient world's *King Farmer* literary motif was not expressed visually with a king bent over sheaves of grain the way Akhenaten appears to have been in Egypt.

Conclusions

Remnants of ancient rituals and beliefs were incorporated by Akhenaten in the ceremonies dedicated to Aten, probably designed to celebrate the abundance of natural resources under Aten's and the King's combined reign of light while exalting royal power over

[11] A fertility or jubilee statue for Guilhou 1999: 353.

[12] Medinet Habu Calendar, list 64 (Nelson 1934: pl. 165 line 1402).

[13] See for example in tomb TT 57 of Khaemhat Mahu, from the reign of Amenhotep III, the date attached to the scene of an offering to a nursing Renenutet (Prisse d'Avennes 1847: pl. 42). Note also the reference to the king, beloved of Neper, responsible for feeding the people in the Teaching of King Amenemhat (Helck 1969: XIa).

[14] On the various residences of the royal family and the youth of Amenhotep IV, see Laboury 2010: 84–85.

[15] See Guilhou 1999 for various grain offerings.

[16] Olive trees or branches are also the object of depictions in the North Palace of Amarna (Weatherhead 2007: 209–210 fig. 116, pl. 38) and olives (fruit, oil, even trees?) appear to have been familiar since Akhenaten's reign (Kelder 2009: 343–344).

[17] In *Pyramid Texts* Spell 521§ 1224b, pintail ducks must be caught (Allen 2013: 179).

[18] For example the ploughing of the fields. See Ziffer 2002: 22.

[19] On the representation of this theme, see the Mesopotamian cylinder seals of the Jemdet Nasr period (3100–2900 BCE), e.g. Amiet 1961: pl. 43 no. 637-B = Iraq Museum 18828; pl. 44 no. 639 = Louvre AO 6620, from Uruk; Marchesi and Marchetti 2011: 190–192. According to Miller, Jones and Pittman 2016, the "cereals" are actually date palm offshoots; in other cases, the plant fed to the herd varies (see Amiet 1961: pl. 44 no. 640 = Yale NBC 2579; pl. 43 no. 638 = BM 116722).

the enemies of Egypt. Given the fragmentary state of the visuals and the absence of texts, no evidence of a harvest festival during which the *first fruits* of the crop were offered by the King to the divinity can be discerned. The Egyptian King is presented for the first time under Akhenaten's reign in temple (and palace?) iconography bowed over sheaves of grain, possibly cutting them. The scant visual material related to the royal couple manipulating grain sheaves precedes the Ramesside depictions of the king cutting a sheaf at the temple during the Min Festival or harvesting in the Field of Rushes in the Afterlife. The Atenist imagery was probably suggested by ancient Heliopolitan beliefs and by harvest celebrations such as the Festival of Renenutet. The Queen's participation, as in most rituals performed by the Atenist King, is consistently seen at Amarna, and this probably influenced the presence of a passive queen in the Ramesside iconography of the Min Festival. One cannot dismiss the fact that the Ramesside temple reliefs would not have looked the same without Akhenaten's creativity, and it may be concluded that their depictions of the Festival of Min and of the King's labours in the Afterlife were perhaps influenced by Akhenaten's divine crop.

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Chapter 20:
Two Iron Age female figurines from Tel Rekhesh

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Abstract. Terracotta female figurines holding a disc are widespread in the Iron Age II southern Levant. This paper presents two such figurines unearthed at Tel Rekhesh, analyses the distribution of this type and discusses the reason for its wide circulation across political borders.

Keywords: female figurine, Iron Age, southern Levant, Tel Rekhesh.

Introduction

Terracotta female plaque figurines holding disc-like objects have been unearthed from various Iron Age II sites in the southern Levant. Although they are mainly excavated in a region traditionally attributed to the kingdom of Israel, they are also found at sites usually ascribed to the kingdoms of Judah, Edom, Ammon and Moab (Paz 2007: 57, fig. 3.1; Sugimoto 2008: 55, map 1).[1] Their wide distribution seemingly supports the assumption that this type of figurine was used by inhabitants across ancient political boundaries. Given the density of excavations within the political territory of the modern state of Israel compared with those in the West Bank, Syria, and Jordan, the distribution map of this type may be updated in the future. Nevertheless, the pattern that crosses political borders will remain the same. However, previous studies were unable to offer a reasonable explanation for this phenomenon.

This short paper first presents two such figurines discovered at Tel Rekhesh, describes their features, analyses the distribution pattern, and discusses the reason for its wide distribution across the political borders.

Two female figurines from Tel Rekhesh

Tel Rekhesh is located in the eastern part of the Lower Galilee, approximately 8 km southeast of Mt. Tabor (Figure 1). The mound is situated west of the confluence of the Rekhesh River, which originates from ʿEn Rekhesh and flows from northeast to southwest, and the Tavor River, which flows from northwest to southeast (Figure 2). A Japanese expedition conducted 13 seasons of excavation between 2006 and 2023 and revealed a long settlement history of the site, i.e. from the Early Bronze Age to the early Roman Period. The site, which measures ca. 4.5 ha, consists of an upper mound (ca. 0.5 ha) surrounded by a lower shelf.

Two fragments of terracotta female figurines were unearthed in 2010. One (henceforth, R1; Figure 3) was found at a level of 29.13 m in L2500 in an area adjacent to a large structure, which is presumably part of city-gate of the Iron Age I. The area was located at the north-western edge of the upper mound. L2500 is located east of the threshold of the entrance to an Iron Age II room (Room 2358; Figure 4), which lies below the level of the threshold. The associated finds date to the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age II, and Late Iron to Persian, among which Iron Age II is prominent. Room 2358 was seemingly part of a large Iron II building complex that extended southward (Tsukimoto *et al.* 2013).

The woman of R1 (H 8.5 cm; W 4.5 cm) holds a disc with both hands in front of her left breast. The two hands are at the same height. She may be wearing two or three armlets on her right forearm. The right breast is visible; but it remains unclear whether it is clothed or not – the nipple is indiscernible. The disc seemingly has a few small circles along its upper edge. The head and the lower part of the legs are missing. On the neck, three parallel concave lines are visible, which may represent a necklace. Two concave lines are also visible on the waist, which may express a belt with an uncertain design, making it difficult to determine whether or not the lower part of the figurine is naked or partially dressed. The upper and lower edges of this belt-like design look similar to twisted ropes. A triangle is found in the lower part of the body, which is divided from the belly by a horizontal line and most probably expresses a pubic area, although the genitals are not clearly marked.

Another fragment of a clay female figurine (henceforth, R2; Figure 5) was discovered in an accumulation of soil

[1] Recently, two more figurines were excavated in the north, one at Tel Abel Beth Maacah (Panitz-Cohen and Tsoran 2022), and the other in the Golan Heights (https://www.ynet.co.il/article/SyMVl11KYv).

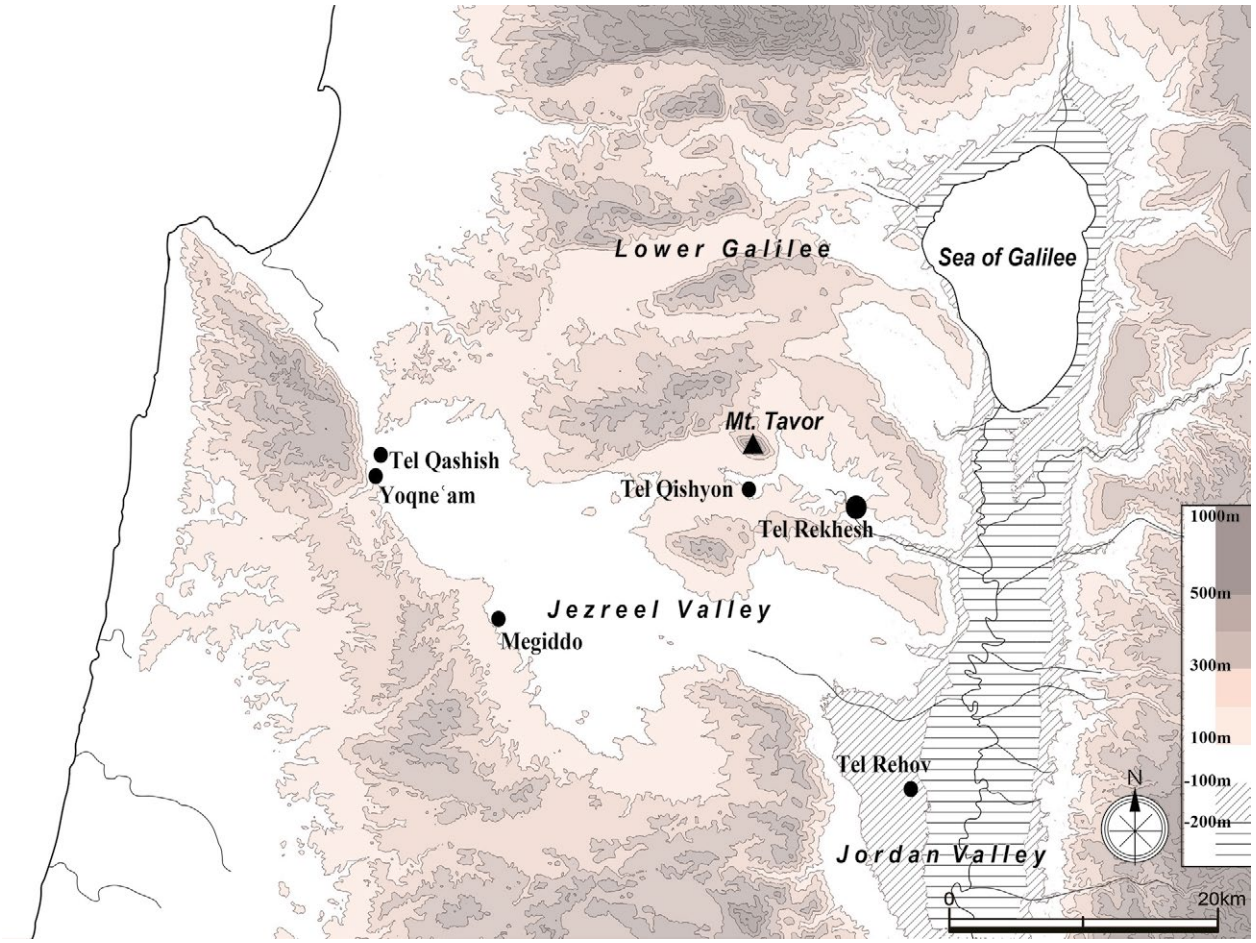

Figure 1. Map of Tel Rekhesh (© S. Hasegawa).

inside the courtyard of a Roman domestic house on the western side of the summit of the mound (Hasegawa and Paz 2015). The locus (L1021) yielded a large amount of mixed pottery. The extant part of the figurine is only from the waist to the thighs (H 4.3 cm; W 3.6 cm). A pubic area with genitalia is clearly visible. Incised lines and small depressions above the pubic area may express pubic hair or a place for inlay to the same effect. Above, a horizontal incision may represent a belt. Despite its fragmentary condition, its preserved features permit the determination of this figurine as the type under discussion.

The backs of mould-made R1 and R2 are smooth and undecorated. Although the lower part of the legs is missing, comparison with better preserved specimens of this widespread type indicates that both figurines were not free-standing. These features categorise R1 and R2 as plaque figurines, specifically Type A (Plaque Figurines of Women Holding a Round Object) of S. Paz (2007: 12). The majority of this type have been unearthed in Iron Age II contexts. Thus, dating R1 and R2 to the same time stands to reason.

Previous studies on south Levantine Iron Age female terracotta figurines with a disc

Many scholars have discussed the said figurines from different perspectives (for previous research, see Paz 2007: 52; Sugimoto 2008: 6–10). For the goal of the present study, reviewing all previous research is not necessary. We briefly review the two latest and most comprehensive studies that were published nearly at the same time.

S. Paz (2007) examined 65 female plaque figurines from the southern Levant. First, she identified the disc as a musical instrument and identified the person holding it as a woman. Her focus stemmed from her interest in the portrayal of women in ancient societies, and she treated the female terracotta figurine holding a disc as a clue for revealing aspects of women's lives in the southern Levant during the Iron Age II (1000–925 BCE). According to the author, this style of terracotta figurine can be regarded as an expression or trace of the diverse lifestyles and social roles of women.

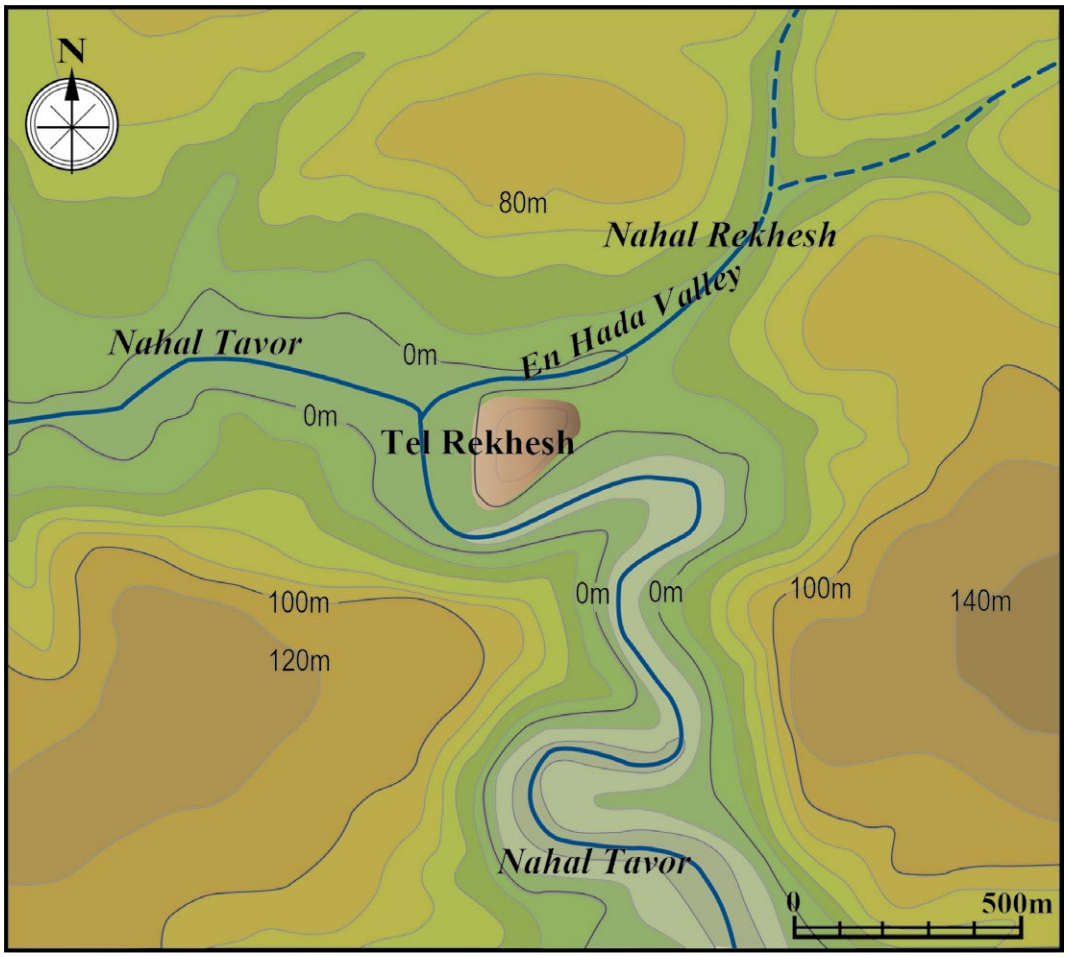

Figure 2. Location of Tel Rekhesh (© S. Hasegawa).

Figure 3. Fragment of a terracotta female figurine from Tel Rekhesh (R1) (courtesy of Tel Rekhesh Project)

In a similar manner, D.T. Sugimoto (2008) investigated 55 terracotta female plaque figurines from the southern Levant. He identified the disc as a drum and explained, with reliance on biblical text, that they represent belief in Astarte who was given the character of Ishtar as the goddess of war. Thus, Sugimoto classified the disc-bearing female terracotta figurines as ritual implements of the goddess Astarte and considered them as traces or embodiments of Astarte worship during the ninth century BCE. He also located this type of figurines in the history of religion and in the origin and development of monotheism in ancient Israel. According to the author, this type of figurine appeared and flourished in the territory of the United Monarchy of Israel during the Iron Age IIA as a trace of the Astarte faith and a remnant of the polytheistic and fertility religion of the Bronze Age. However, after the Kingdom of Judah promoted the Yahweh rituals, the Astarte religion continued to decline, and the number of excavated female terracotta figurines with a disc, which had been their ritual objects, decreased accordingly.

These two studies comprehensively collected and catalogued the figurines under discussion, which provided basic data for further study. In the following

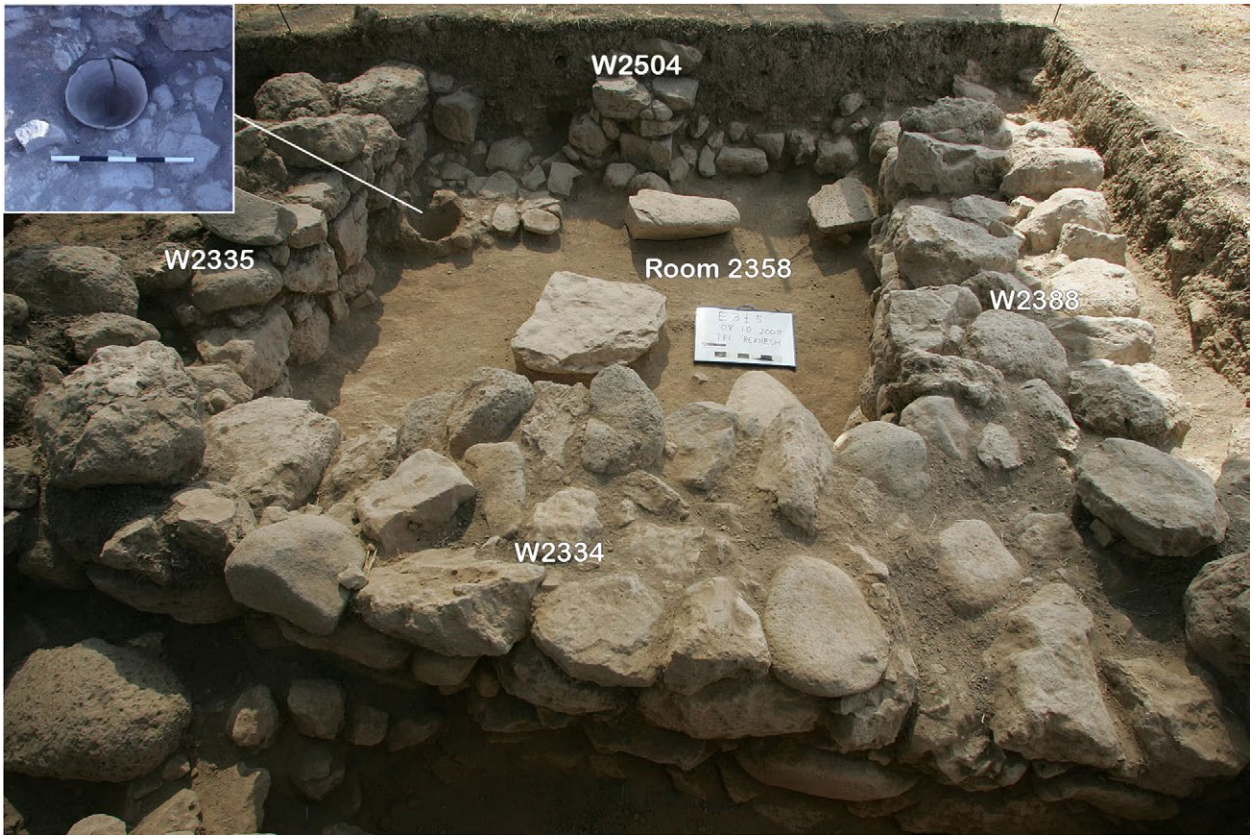

Figure 4. Room 2358 (courtesy of Tel Rekhesh Project)

Figure 5. Fragment of a terracotta figurine from Tel Rekhesh (R2) (courtesy of Tel Rekhesh Project)

section, we analyse the stylistic features of R1 and R2 by consulting the information provided by these two studies.

Stylistic Analysis of R1 and R2

The stylistic features of R1 that are distinguishable from some other sub-types of figurines are a necklace, belt and triangular pubic area. A parallel that possesses all three stylistic features comes from Megiddo (Paz 2007: 18, fig. 2.1: 11). Other parallels that share these features were unearthed at Tel Reḥov (Paz 2007: 23, fig. 2.2: 4; Sugimoto 2008: 119, N25), Tel ʿIra (Paz 2007: 29, fig. 2.2: 10), Tell Deir ʿAlla (Sugimoto 2008: 122, T7; 123, T10) and one has no provenance (Sugimoto 2008: 120, N29).

R2 is too fragmentary to permit a detailed description. Nevertheless, its exposed genitalia and the horizontal depression above it are distinct. Among the figurines with exposed genitalia, the one from Tel Reḥov with a horizontal depression above the pubic area (Paz 2007: 21–22, fig. 2.2: 1) seems to be the closest parallel.

Distribution Analysis

The terracotta female plaque figurines with a disc have been found in wide areas of the southern Levant. The northernmost, southernmost, westernmost and easternmost sites are Tel Abel Beth Maacah, Kerak, Aphek and Amman, respectively. Thus, the area encompasses the northern valleys, the Golan Heights, central highlands, coastal plain, the Shephelah, the Negev and the Transjordanian Plateau. The variety of topography of the sites where this type of figurines was discovered indicates that topography does not play any role in the use of this type of figurine. Nevertheless, a certain tendency in the geographical distribution is seemingly discernable. In terms of the spatial distribution of the figurines, Paz (2007: 55) concluded as follows:

> "It seems that these figurines are mainly characteristic of the Kingdom of Israel, while not appearing in Judah at all, except for the sites in the eastern Negev. It would appear that their occurrence here results from the ties between this region and Transjordan, where such figurines are common throughout Iron Age II".

Given the chronological factor, Paz (2007: 57) stated as follows:

> "The dating of the figurines in combination with their spatial distribution indicates that, at the outset, they were common in the Kingdom of Israel and in the Transjordanian kingdoms, while in Judah they were absent, except for a few examples from the Negev".

Other scholars made similar observations (e.g. Sugimoto 2008: 51–60; Kletter and Saarelainen 2022: 156–157). Indeed, our figurines are dominant in the northern part of the southern Levant in the Iron Age II, and pillar female figurines are much more popular in the southern part. However, we should avoid readily connecting the distribution to geopolitical situations in the period. Kletter and Saarelainen (2022: 157) pointed out that more figurines were made in the eighth and seventh century BCE, the period after the Assyrian empire devastated the northern part of the southern Levant and that this chronological gap may explain the difference in distribution. At any rate, the distribution pattern beyond the political boundaries demonstrated that a practice using the figurine is less related to the policy of rulers but more to the custom of the inhabitants. The scarce finds from Tell el-Farʿah (N) and Samaria, the capitals of the Northern Kingdom of Israel according to biblical text (1 Kgs 15:33; 16:8, 15, 23), also support this view.

Quantitative analysis indicates a concentration of figurines in the Jordan Valley. The map in Figure 6 depicts the distribution of 80 plaque figurines from the Iron Age southern Levant. Data for the map are collected from the monographs of Paz (2007) and Sugimoto (2008) and supplemented by recent data published by Saarelainen and Kletter (2020) and Panitz-Cohen and Tzoran (2022). A total of 20 figurines were discovered at Tel Reḥov, nine at Tel Megiddo, five each at Amman and Tel Beth-Shean, four each at Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tel Dover, and three each from Samaria and Wadi ath-Thamad. The number of the figurines from the four sites located in the Jordan Valley (i.e. Tel Reḥov, Tel Beth-Shean, Tell Deir ʿAlla and Tel Dover) amounts to 33, or more than 40 per cent of the total (Figure 7). The number of figurines from Tel Reḥov is particularly remarkable. The terracotta female plaque figurines with a disc were used especially in the Jordan Valley between the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee and Tell Deir ʿAlla. The sites, which are located relatively far from the Valley but exhibit a certain concentration of figurines, such as Tel Megiddo and Amman, lead to the interpretation that the inhabitants established a close connection with or shared the practice using the figurines with the people in the Valley. The size of the sites should also be considered, although Tel Hazor, a mega site, has yielded only one figurine of this type.

Terracotta plaque female figurines with a disc were made using a mould. A few sets of the figurines made with identical moulds have been discovered (Paz 2007: 57–58). Specifically, two sets of figurines produced using identical moulds were found from two sites, one of which lies beyond the assumed political borders. Such sets were those from Tel Reḥov and near Tel Beth-Shean, Tel Reḥov, Tel el-Farʿah and Amman (Paz 2007: 58; Saarelainen and Kletter 2021: 564–565; Kletter and Saarelainen 2022: 153). The discovery of the first set is not extremely surprising, because the two sites are located only 5 km apart, whereas the second set is relatively remarkable. The reason for the wide distribution of the second figurines may be explained by the direct or indirect communication between the inhabitants. This aspect is another piece of evidence that the inhabitants of the region across the political boundaries shared the practice of using the figurine.

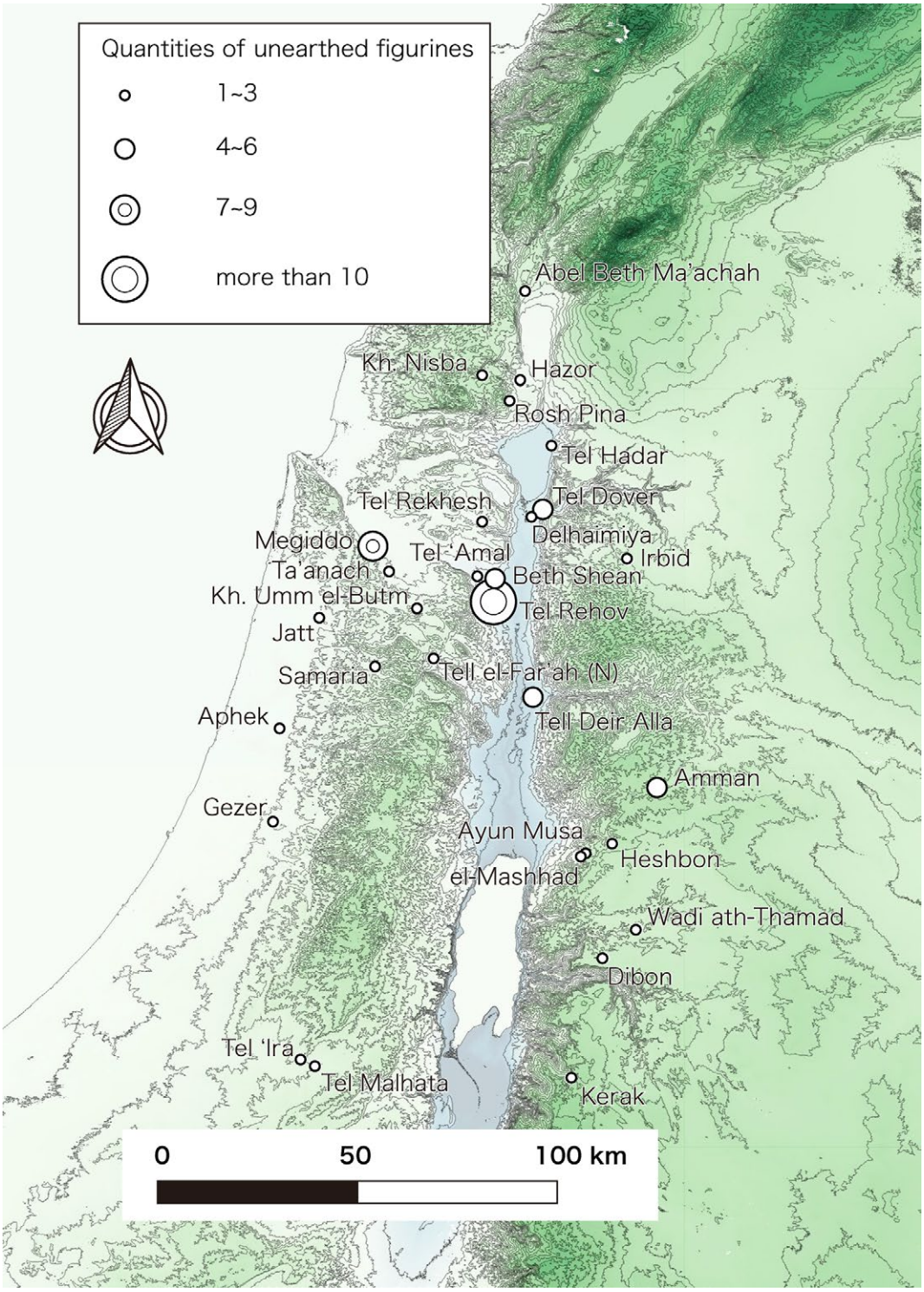

Figure 6. Distribution map of plaque figurines (© S. Hasegawa).

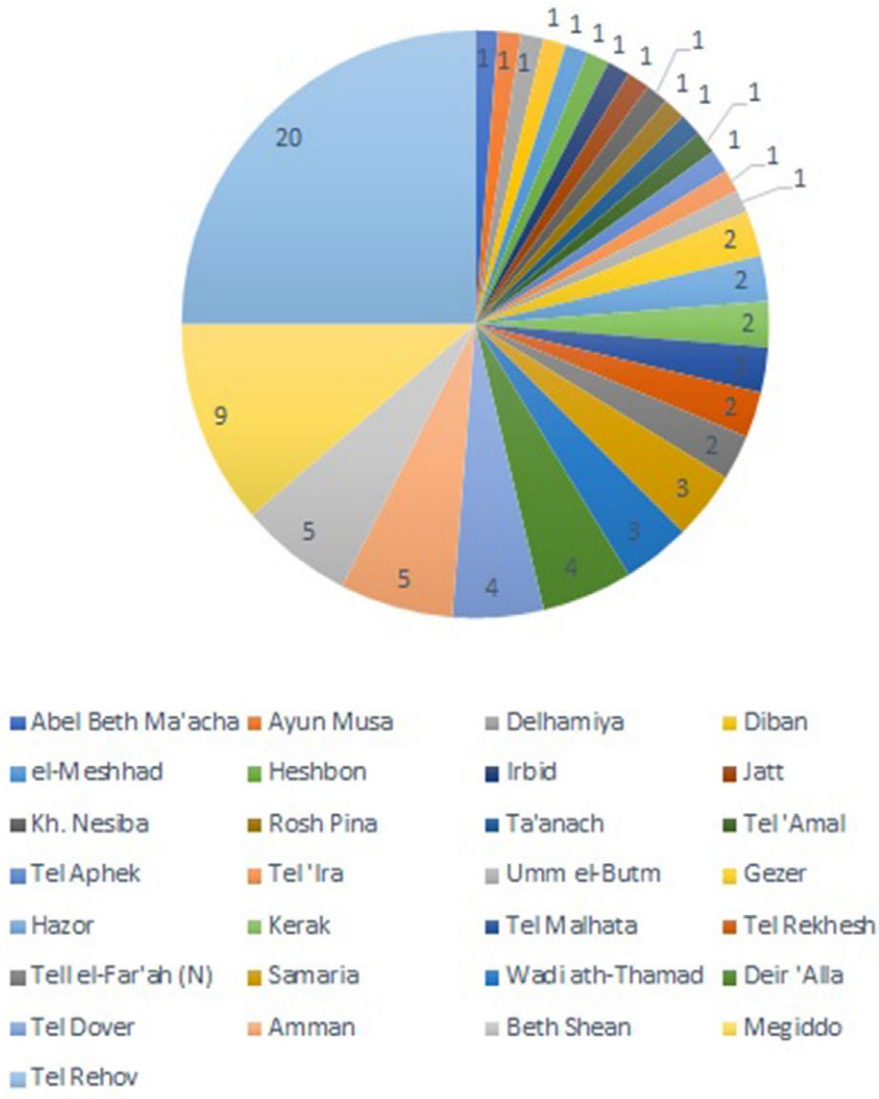

Figure 7. Quantitative analysis of plaque figurines (© S. Hasegawa).

Conclusion

Two fragmentary clay female figurines (R1 and R2) were discovered at Tel Rekhesh in the eastern Lower Galilee and were identified as terracotta plaque female figurines with a disc, which were popular in the Iron Age II southern Levant. There closest parallels are those from the Jezreel Valley and the Jordan Valley.

The terracotta plaque female figurines with a disc are widely distributed in the Iron Age II southern Levant. Distribution analysis demonstrates their concentration, especially in the Jordan Valley. The fact that this type of figurines is found across assumed political boundaries of the Iron Age II and that three figurines made using an identical mould were found from two regions belonging to two political entities indicates that the inhabitants of the region shared the practice using the figurines independent of their political affinities.

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Chapter 21: In the sign of the scorpion: The administrative seals of the Neo-Assyrian queen and the queen's household

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Abstract. The extensive clay sealing corpus discovered by A.H. Layard in Room LXI of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace at Nineveh is best known for the many examples of the Assyrian royal seal type impressed on tags and container sealings. Although the royal seal type predominates, other official seals of the palace administration are also well represented. Our paper focuses on the second most frequent seal type which bears as sole motif a scorpion surrounded by either a guilloche, a garland, or simply the imprint of the seal mount. This seal type has been interpreted as the administrative seal of the Assyrian queen and her household. In the following we will discuss the archaeological evidence from Nineveh that reinforces this interpretation. Through the analysis of the backs of the clay sealings, we can better understand the function of the scorpion seal within the palace administration.

Keywords: Assyrian royal seals and sealings, sealing practices, palace administration, scorpion symbol, Assyrian queens' governance, Nineveh Southwest Palace.

One of the most interesting groups of artefacts discovered by A.H. Layard at Nineveh is the corpus of ca. 450 clay sealings from Room 61 of Sennacherib's Southwest Palace.[1] Most of these clay sealings are impressed with a seal showing the king in combat with a rampant lion, a recurring seal type which Layard was the first to recognize as "the royal, and indeed, the national seal or signet" (Layard 1853b: 154). Whereas the royal seal type figures most prominently in this corpus, other official seals of the palace administration are also well represented. The subject of our paper focuses on the second most frequent type of official seal, that is, one bearing the sole motif of a scorpion surrounded by either a guilloche or garland border or simply the imprint of the seal setting (Figure 1.1–12; Figure 5.1–7). Based on the objects found in the domestic wing of the Northwest palace in Nimrud /Kalhu, it was Parker (1955: 11f.) and Mallowan (1966: 114) who first suggested that the scorpion is likely to be associated with the queen or the palace women. In my earlier studies on the royal and administrative seals from the Nineveh corpus, I furthermore proposed that the scorpion symbolized the administration of the queen within the palace (Herbordt 1992: 136f and 1997: 282). This interpretation is now generally accepted,[2] and has been further developed in two subsequent detailed studies by Radner (2008: 494–501 and 2012). In my contribution to the Festschrift in honour of Tallay Ornan, who has worked extensively on the subject of symbols and iconography as well as the queen and royal women in Neo-Assyrian art, I would like to return to the archaeological evidence from Nineveh that reinforces the interpretation of the scorpion as symbol of the queen and her household. By examination of the reverse sides of the clay sealings bearing the scorpion seal, we can better understand their function within the palace administration.

The Nineveh clay sealing corpus

Layard's original interpretation that the clay sealings from room 61 served as sealings for papyri is now obsolete and has been revised. Subsequent studies by Sachs, Millard, Postgate, and Herbordt corrected this interpretation and revealed that the sealings had been attached to containers of various kinds (Sachs 1953: 167; Millard 1965: 14f; Postgate 1974: 24–28; Herbordt 1992: 16f, 1997: 280 and 2021: 39–49). The majority of the seal material was excavated by Layard in 1849 and is stored in the British Museum under the collection numbered "51–9–2" (some with the registration numbers 84526–84909 and 89932–89995).[3] A number of clay sealings associated with the 51–9–2 collection was later excavated by Rassam and Smith and are included here as are a number of further Nineveh sealings from the excavations of Budge and Thompson. In the course of my study of the Neo-Assyrian seal impressions in the British Museum in 1987 and 1989, I was able to examine

[1] See Layard 1853b: 153–155. 460–462; on this group of clay sealings and their findspot see also Herbordt 1992: 16f, 53–55 and 2021: 39–49.
[2] See, for example, Collon 1995: 73f; Ornan 2002: 470f; Melville 2004: 50f; Niederreiter 2008: 59–61; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 105 no. 230; Macgregor 2012: 73–77; Svärd 2015: 67–69.
[3] On the British Museum Collections see Reade 1986: XXVIII; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 17–23.

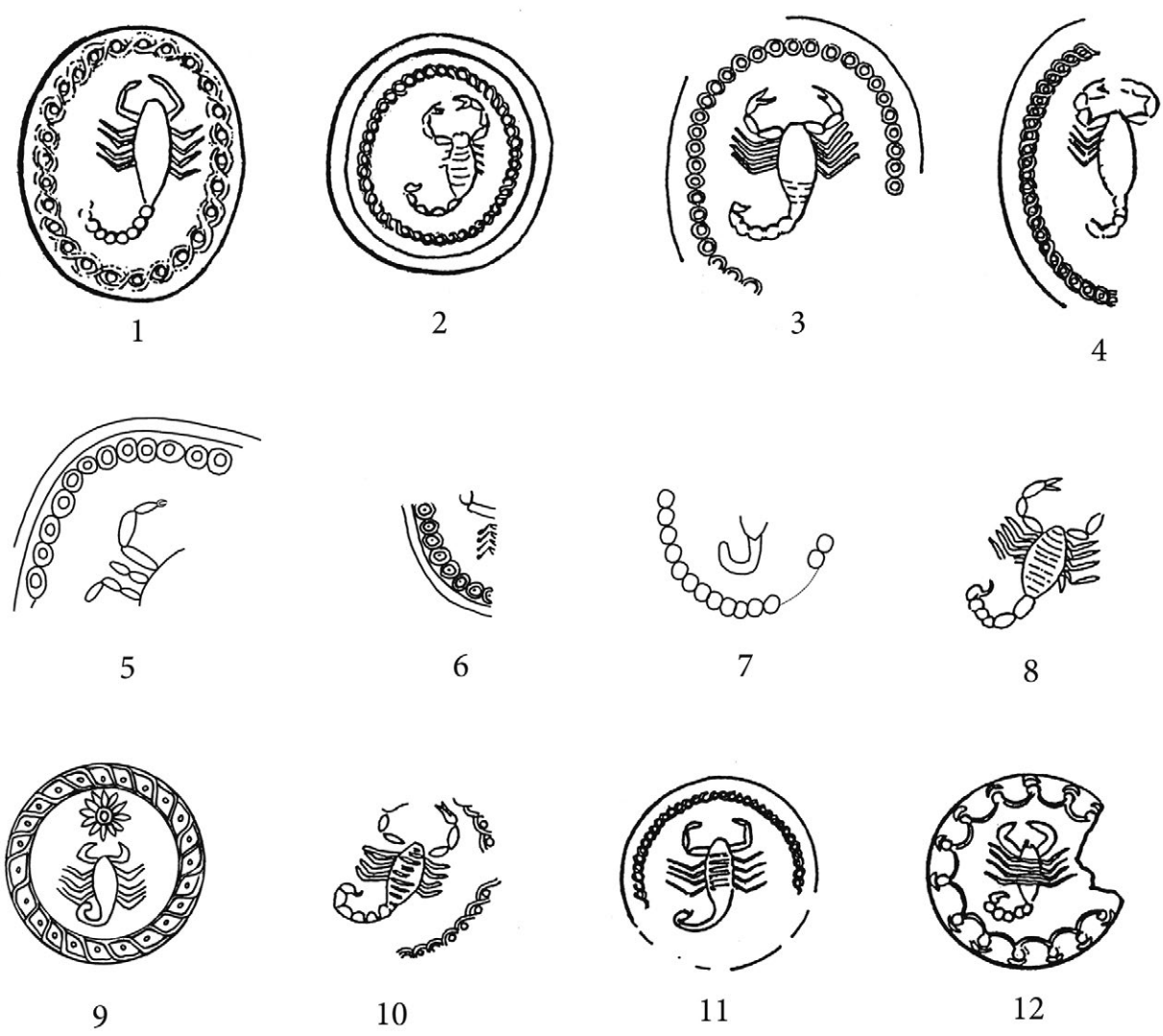

Figure 1. Twelve seal impressions from Nineveh with scorpion motif (figures 1–4, 8, and 10–12 after Mitchell and Searight 2008: 105 f. cat. 230 a and b. 232 a–e. 233. Courtesy of Ann Searight. Figures 5 and 7 by S. Herbordt. Figures 6 and 9 after Herbordt 1992: pl. 20, 5 and 6).

565 pieces.[4] In addition to recording the impressed seals, it was possible to analyse the reverse sides, and in most cases, determine what objects were sealed. These include a variety of containers such as bags, jars, baskets, and wooden chests.

The scorpion seal impressions

The scorpion seal impressions comprise the second largest group of administrative seals in the Nineveh corpus, second only to the royal seal type. In my initial publication I identified a total of 65 examples (65/565 comprising 12% of the material). The present catalogue, however, adds a number of sealings from the work of Radner (2008: 495f with fig. 8), and Mitchell and Searight (2008: 105f cat. nos. 230–233), as well as the examples on textile dockets, bringing the total to 78 pieces (Appendix 1).

As was the case with the royal seal type, the scorpion seals can be distinguished typologically by means of the seal shape (oval or circular), the seal surface (flat or concave when impressed) and the type of border decoration. Of the 78 examples 58 show the scorpion with a guilloche border (Figure 2).[5] Of these, 40 are oval in shape (Figure 1.1–8; Figure 5.7) and 18 circular (Figure 1.9–11; Figure 5.2 and 3). We were able to

[4] For a detailed study of the container sealings and a statistical analysis of their frequency of occurrence see Herbordt 1992: 53–70; *Ead.* 1997: 279–281, pls. 22–25; *Ead.* 2021: 44 with fig. 8, 45f with fig. 9.

[5] In three cases, the guilloche is uncertain because of the poor seal preservation.

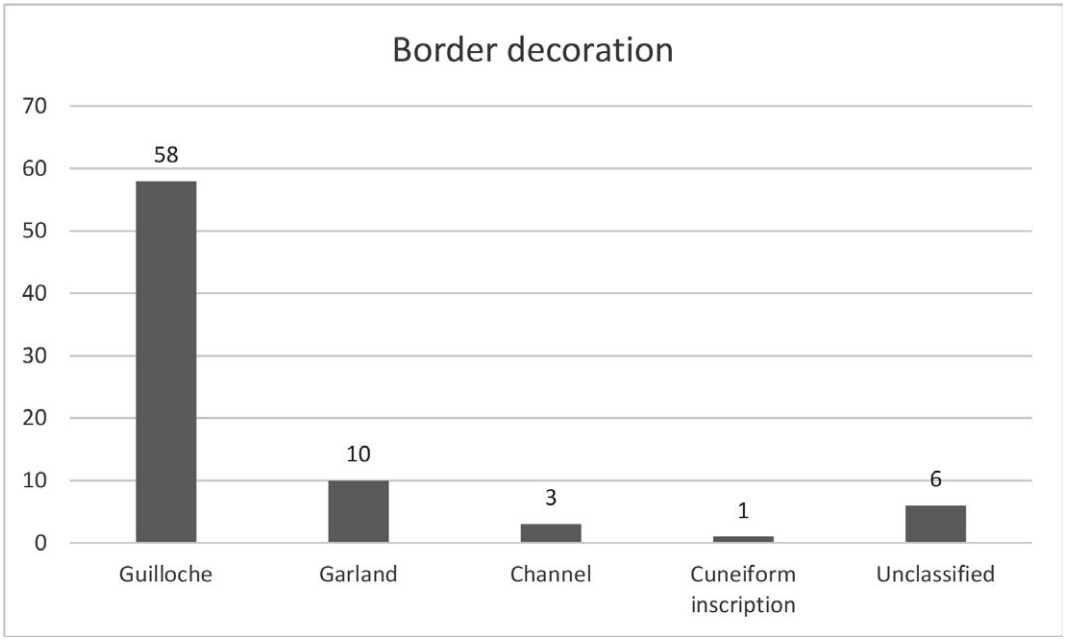

Figure 2. Border decorations of scorpion seals (Diagram by S. Herbordt).

distinguish a minimum of 14 individual seals with a guilloche border (Appendix 1, types 1–14).[6] Scorpion seals with a garland border occur ten times (Figures 1.12, 5.5, and 5.6), all impressions being circular and concave. Four individual seals with a garland border could be distinguished (Appendix 1, types 16–19). In one instance, an oval scorpion seal without a border decoration is attested. However, the scorpion design is surrounded by a channel of impressed dots – clearly the impression of the granulation on the seal mount (Appendix 1, type 15; Figure 1.7).[7] There is only one attestation of a scorpion seal surrounded by a cuneiform inscription, unfortunately fragmentarily preserved and not legible (Appendix 1, type 20).[8] One particular seal in the "oval-guilloche" group stands out because of its impressive size (Figure 1.5; Appendix 1, type 14 = K. 1483). It is impressed on an administrative document listing textiles (textile docket) rather than a clay sealing. To sum up, a minimum of 20 different scorpion seals were in use in the palace administration of the Southwest Palace in Nineveh.

Attestations of use

Until the present day, no actual scorpion seals have been preserved. They are attested solely by their impressions on records and clay sealings. In the following, we will examine on the basis of our catalogue (Appendix 1) the range of different objects impressed with scorpion seals in order to determine their administrative function.

Of the 78 sealed objects, the clay tags predominate with a total of 56 (Figure 3). A tag is a small circular or triangular lump of clay formed around a knotted cord (Figure 5.1–7). The seal is impressed on one side only. Because tags hung freely from a cord and were not fixed directly onto an object, their exact function cannot be determined. They could have been used to seal a door or any kind of container. None of the tags represented here bear an inscription.

The sealings on wooden boxes are the second largest category with a total of 13.[9] The backs of this sealing type bear the impression of a flat, textured wooden surface, a knob, and a cord. Occasionally, impressions of parallel slats can be seen, indicating that the sealed container was a crate (Figure 4).[10] One possible example of a two-tier authentication is found on box sealing B.M. 90962 of which Radner (2008: 496, fig. 8) published a photo. A minute circular seal is impressed in the middle of the obverse among the scorpion seals. This seal impression needs to be collated, but provisionally its design looks like a dagger with a knob handle and a hilt pointing downward, surrounded by a guilloche border. For comparison, an elaborate administrative seal depicting a

[6] In cases of poor seal preservation, no attribution to an individual seal type could be made.
[7] A good illustration of a stamp seal in its gold mount (the "Nimrud jewel") together with a modern plaster impression can be found in Mallowan 1966: 114, fig. 58.
[8] See also Radner 2008: 500f with fig. 19.
[9] For a detailed discussion of the different types of box sealings see Herbordt 1992: 63–66 (Typ 4b–4e); *Ead.* 1997: 279f.
[10] A photo of a box sealing (B.M. 20574) showing impressions of parallel wooden slats is published online: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_K-20574.

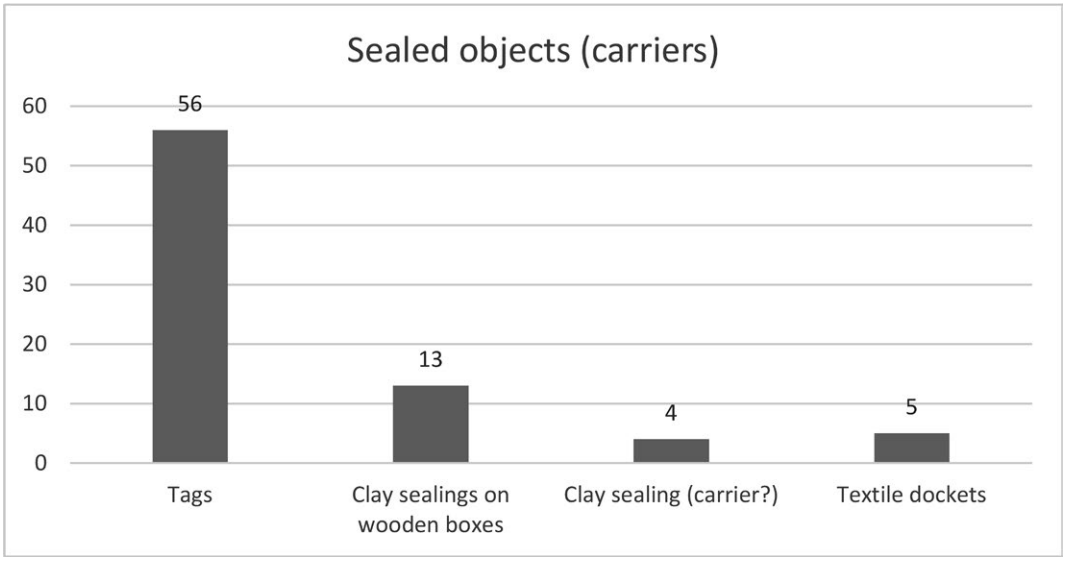

Figure 3. Diagram of sealed objects - carriers (by S. Herbordt).

dagger may serve as a comparison. It is impressed on two tags from the same sealing corpus in Nineveh (Figure 5.8 [B.M. 84538] and B.M. 84814). One is further reminded of a similar case in which administrative stamp seals showing a mace are used in two-tier authentication on box sealings from the Governor's Palace in Nimrud.[11]

A total of four pieces are unclassified. In three cases the reverse of the sealing shows only the impression of a cord and one object is undetermined due to poor preservation.

In addition to the seal impressions on tags and wooden boxes, the scorpion seal is attested on four (possibly five) so-called textile dockets (Figure 3). These triangular-shaped tablets with texts consisting of textile lists were shaped around a knotted cord (Fales and Postgate 1992: XXVIf; Herbordt 1992: 68f; Radner 2008: 501). Both the textile dockets and wooden box sealings indicate that the queen's household played a significant role in the administration of the palace's textile production and distribution and provide additional evidence for the queen's palace as a centre of textile production (Radner 2008: 509f and 2012, 693; Parpola 2012: 618). A preserved eponym date on one textile docket with the scorpion seal places it in the reign of Assurbanipal (658 BCE; Figure 1.9; Appendix 1, no. 43).

[11] On these official administrative seals see Postgate 1973: 249 no. 132, 170–171; Herbordt 1992: 143f, 194 (Nimrud 89) with pl. 20.14, and 199 (Nimrud 111); Radner 2008: 507f.

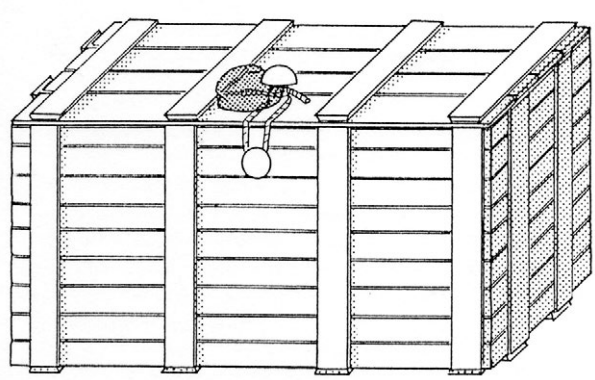

Figure 4. Box sealing reconstruction (after Herbordt 1992: 62, fig. 11, 1).

Were individual seals used for specific administrative tasks?

In an attempt to establish whether or not individual seal types can be identified by their use for specific administrative tasks, we return to our clay sealing corpus and will examine patterns of use when attested in five or more cases. In particular, the scorpion seal type no. 11 is conspicuous because it was used exclusively for sealing wooden boxes in 8 (possibly 9) cases (Appendix 1, nos. 31–39). Whereas this is the clearest example, other frequently used seal types occur exclusively on tags: seal type no. 2 (Figures 1.8, and 5.1) on tags in seven cases, seal type no. 10 (Figure 5.4) in six cases, seal type no. 3 (Figures 1.10, and 5.3) in five cases, and seal type no. 18 (Figure 5.6) in five cases. However, this pattern is not always consistent. Type no. 8 (Figure 5.7), a conspicuously large seal, and indeed the only one with the scorpion's tail pointing to the right, occurs both on

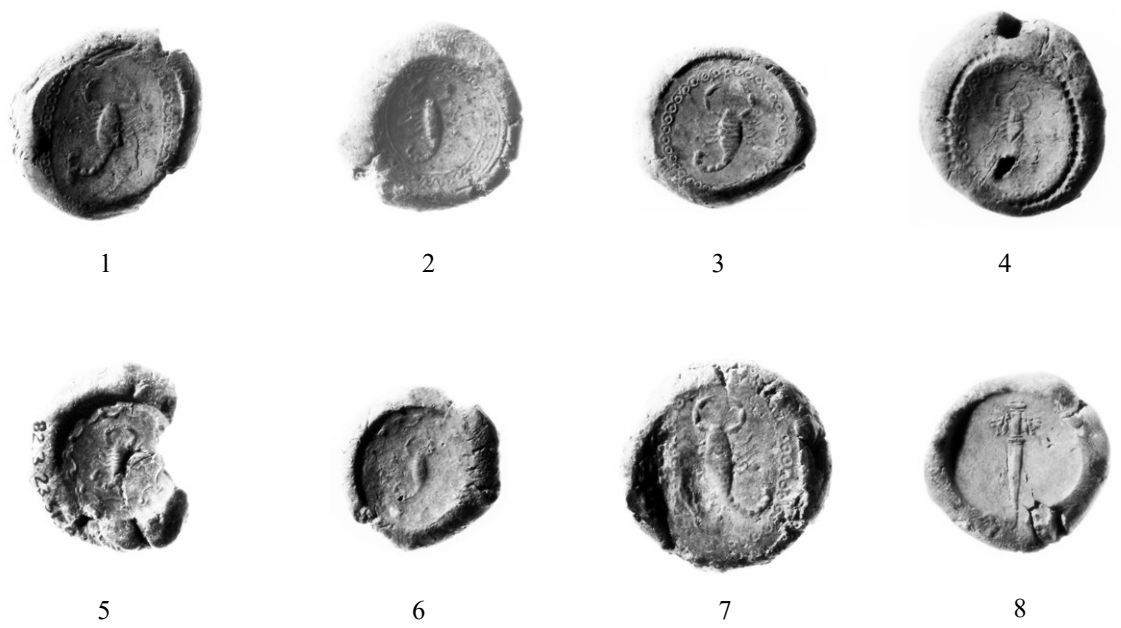

Figure 5.1-8. Clay sealings from Nineveh with scorpion and dagger motif (after Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 1-8).

two tags and one box sealing. Type no. 12 also occurs both on a tag and two box sealings.

Other seals and objects with the scorpion symbol

The scorpion as the symbol of Neo-Assyrian queens has been further substantiated by the discoveries in the queens' tombs in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. In particular, the gold stamp seal from Tomb 3 is the first attested example of a seal belonging to an Assyrian queen (Hussein 2016: pl. 133 a). The cuneiform inscription on the seal edge names Hamâ, queen of Shalmaneser IV (782–773 BCE), king of Assyria, and daughter-in-law of Adad-nirari III, as seal owner (Al-Rawi 2008: 136). The inscription provides an exact date at the beginning of the 8th century thus linking the scorpion motif to the Assyrian queens over a period of at least two centuries (8th–7th centuries BCE). The seal of Hamâ shows a female worshipper, likely the queen, facing an enthroned goddess. A scorpion is shown behind the throne; a guilloche border surrounds the figural scene.

In addition to the seal of Hamâ, several objects from Tomb 2 bear a cuneiform inscription together with the symbol of the scorpion. Significant as a further example for the autonomous administration of the queen and her household is a bronze duck weight with an incised cuneiform inscription preceded by an incised scorpion on one side. The duck weight is thus marked as belonging to the queen's household. The other side bears an Aramaic inscription (Al-Rawi 2008: 126f, 129 fig. 15i; Hussein 2016: pl. 82d–f).[12] A counterpart in stone to the bronze duck weight can be associated with the palace administration of the king. The large stone duck weight from Tomb 3 bears an incised cuneiform label naming the palace of king Tiglatpileser as well as the incised figure of a lion (Al-Rawi 2008: 131 fig. 15m; Hussein 2016: pl. 94a).[13]

Two further objects from Tomb 2, a gold bowl and a mirror, are also incised with the scorpion symbol. They are labelled by the cuneiform inscription as belonging to Atalia, queen of Sargon II (721–705 BCE; Al-Rawi 2008: 137, fig. 15z and fig. 15cc). To be mentioned in this context is also an alabaster vessel from the early excavations at Assur with an incised scorpion and a cuneiform inscription naming Sennacherib's queen, Tašmetu-šarrat (Orlamünde 2003: 141 with figs. 2 and 3).

It is noteworthy that only one other seal with a scorpion motif has been found among the grave goods from the queens' tombs. A faience stamp seal with a rudimentary rendering of a scorpion and no border decoration (Hussein 2016: 163; pl. 193a) was found in Chamber A under Room 75 of the Northwest Palace. A further example from Room 77 of the "harem" is a faience cylinder seal with a hunting scene showing an archer shooting at an oversized scorpion (Hussein 2016:

[12] According to the catalogue entry in Hussein 2016: 100 (IM 115432) "both inscriptions translate as 'one sixth of a mina', but strokes indicate actually six mina minus two shekels." The actual weight is 170 g.
[13] The inscription gives a weight of 15 minas (Al-Rawi 2008: 137).

pl. 186a). In both cases, they differ from our group of scorpion seals and should be considered as personal rather than official seals. And indeed, seals to be classified as personal seals with the scorpion motif – and lacking the guilloche border decoration– have been found at other Assyrian sites and must be differentiated from our group of administrative palace seals.[14]

Also to be mentioned in the context of private versus official seal use are three legal documents from Assur. Two debt notes show an incised scorpion instead of a seal impression (Böhme 2014: 51f, pl. 47, Ist 49; Klengel-Brandt 2014: 103, pl. 67.473).[15] In both cases, however, the seal owners named in the document are male. In addition, a lease contract bears a stamp seal impression showing what appears to be a male worshipper in front of a scorpion – but without a guilloche border (Klengel-Brandt 2014: 89, no. 321, pl. 55.321). Here, too, all persons named in the document are male (Faist 2007: 111f, text 70).

Along with the prominent example of the gold seal of Hamâ, a number of other administrative seals show a scorpion as filling motif in scenes of worship with the king and queen in front of an enthroned or upright deity. Such are a chalcedony seal acquired by the British Museum (Radner 2008: 498, fig.12a–b and 2012: 688 figs.1 and 2),[16] numerous impressions of this seal type on clay sealings from Nineveh, on inscribed so-called sheep sealings from Nimrud, and on a clay sealing from Assur.[17] It was Reade (1987: 144f) who first suggested this seal group belonged to the palace administration of the queen. A further seal impression from Nimrud that is linked to the scorpion group was found in room HH of the Northwest Palace. The seal design shows a female worshipper facing a scorpion; the guilloche border underscores its official function (Herbordt 1992: 137, 200f, Nimrud 115, pl.20.4). It is interesting to note here that the tail of the scorpion faces right. The find-spot together with a number of sheep sealings provides evidence for a date of 716 BCE (reign of Sargon II; Parker 1955: 111f).

The fact that the scorpion symbol appears on two extraordinary seals of the royal seal type, also found in the clay sealing corpus in Nineveh, provides conclusive evidence that it stood for a specific palace office in an administrative procedure. The first example shows the scorpion and a Y-shaped symbol at the right behind the king in combat with a rampant lion (Herbordt 1992: pl.35.7 and 2021: 42 fig.5.6; Radner 2008: 501, fig. 18). Both the scorpion and the Y-shaped symbol occur also on another variant of the royal seal type. On two large seals, each with three circular images showing the motif of the king and lion in combat, either the scorpion or Y-shaped symbol appear three times as a filling motif.[18] Since the royal seal type was used as an administrative seal of the king's palace, both symbols, used either together or individually in this context, seem to identify specific areas of administration within the palace.[19] While the scorpion is to be identified as symbol of the queen and her household, it has been convincingly argued that the Y-shaped symbol (*ispillurtu*) represents the administration of the crown prince (Herbordt 1997: 282; in detail by Radner 2012: 502–506).

Conclusion

In closing we will consider why the scorpion was used as the symbol of the queen and her household. Since late Kassite times, the scorpion is attested as a symbol for the goddess Išhara who shows a variety of characteristics from being a goddess of love, mother goddess and goddess of extispicy to being a war goddess.[20] The close association of the Assyrian queens with Išhara is reflected in the use of the scorpion symbol on seals, weights, and personal objects belonging to the queens. Meinhold has furthermore remarked in this context that, in contrast, there is little evidence in support of a close relationship between the Assyrian queens and the goddess Ištar (Meinhold 2009: 243f). Another possible interpretation for the use of the scorpion symbol was suggested by Walker (in Collon 1995: 73 footnote 6) who draws attention to the fact that the Akkadian word *taritu* can have both the meaning "tail of a scorpion" and "a nurse who raises children". With respect to the position of power of the queen as mother of the crown prince, this double meaning appears significant. A detailed discussion of this wordplay by Radner reinforces the connection of the image of a female scorpion "fiercely guarding and defending her young with her poisonous tail" as a symbol of the Assyrian queen (Radner 2012: 691f).

Thus far, the seal type with the scorpion as a sole motif surrounded by a guilloche or garland border

[14] For example, stamp seals from Assur: Klengel-Brandt 2014: pls. 66 and 67 (nos. 79, 80 and 460); a clay sealing and stamp seal from Tall Šeḫ Ḥamad: Fügert 2015: 193 (nos. 422 and 423). On the repertoire of individual animal representations on Neo-Assyrian stamp seals see Herbordt 1992: 117–119.

[15] On the use of seal substitutes such as incised designs or nail marks on Neo-Assyrian legal documents see Herbordt 1992: 41–45 and Klengel-Brandt 2014: 103.

[16] Radner (2012: 693–695) has attributed this seal to Sennacherib's queen Tašmetu-šarrat.

[17] On this seal type see Reade 1987: 144f; Herbordt 1992: 137f; *Ead.* 1997: 282; Klengel-Brandt 1994: 147–149, Taf. 15a; *Ead.* 2014: 87 (Kat. 289), pl. 53, 289; Radner 2008: 496–499; *Ead.* 2012: 687–693; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 102f (nos. 221–225). On the sheep sealings see Postgate 1973: 20f; Herbordt 1992: 64.

[18] For the variant showing the scorpion symbol, the best photo is published in Mattila 2002: 10, fig.3. See also Mitchell and Searight 2008: 102 (nos. 220 a–b). For the variant with the Y-shaped symbol see Herbordt 1992: pl. 35.8; Radner 2008: 506, figs. 23–27. Maul (1995: 402) dates this seal type to the reign of Esarhaddon.

[19] Radner (2008) uses the term "bureau seals".

[20] See Lambert 1980: 176f; Seidl 1989: 156f; Prechel 1996.

is attested only in the clay sealing corpus of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh in the 7th century under Sennacherib. By contrast, the scorpion as symbol of the Assyrian queen is attested as filling motif on the queen's seal already in the early 8th century. The scorpion seal's emergence coincides with the time in which the queen acquires a more powerful role in the state hierarchy (Radner 2012: 692f). Written sources attest to the fact that the queen was not only in charge of the women's household within the king's palace, but that, furthermore, she had her own palace, estates, villages, and personnel, including guards and a standing army (Melville 2004: 48; Radner 2012: 692).

Appendix 1. Catalogue of sealings from Niniveh with scorpion motif

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
1	84550	1	circular	concave	guilloche + raised line + channel	Dm 17,5	tag	circular			Figure 5.2; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 6; Radner 2008: Fig. 7
2	84552	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	19 × 22	tag	circular			Figure 5.1; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 1
3	84557	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	12 × 15	tag				
4	84592	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche		tag				
5	84604	2	oval	concave	guilloche	17 × 23	tag	Rev. Impression of cord			
6	84700	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	18 × 15	tag				
7	84758	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	W 18 (max)	tag	drop-shaped	large scorpion		
8	84828	2	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	L 17 (max)	tag		guilloche not preserved		Fig. 1, 8; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 105 f. cat. 230 a (drawing)
9	84569	3	circular	flat	guilloche	18 × 15	tag				
10	84603	3	circular	flat	guilloche	Dm 18,5	tag	circular			Figure 5.3; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 3
11	84679	3	circular	flat	guilloche	Dm 19	tag				
12	84829	3	circular	flat	guilloche	Dm 15	tag				Fig. 1, 10; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 105 f. cat. 230 b (drawing); probably also in Layard 1853a: pl. 69, 8
13	84855	3	circular	flat	guilloche	Dm 18,5	tag				
14	84613	4	oval		guilloche	15 × 18	tag		medium size scorpion		
15	84615	4	oval		guilloche	12 × 19	tag	oval	medium size scorpion		
16	84616	5	circular		guilloche with channel	Dm 14	tag	oval	small scorpion		
17	84623	6	oval		guilloche	14 × 19	tag				
18	84669	7	oval	concave	guilloche	19 × 22	tag	circular	huge scorpion		
19	84785	7	oval	slightly concave	guilloche	15 × 19	clay sealing	Rev. Impression of cord; very fragmentary	huge scorpion		

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
20	84705	8	oval		guilloche	18 × 23	tag	circular	huge scorpion with tail pointing to the right		Figure 5.7; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 4
21	84809	8	oval		guilloche	L 23	tag	circular	huge scorpion with tail pointing to the right		
22	84830	8	oval		guilloche	18 × 26	clay sealing	Box sealing; three seal impressions on Obv.; Rev. shows flat wooden surface and impression of cord	huge scorpion with tail pointing to the right		
23	84747	9	oval		guilloche with channel	14 × 16,5	tag		small scorpion		
24	84896	9	oval	concave	guilloche with channel	Dm 13 (max)	tag		small scorpion		
25	84611	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	17 × 17	tag				
26	84710	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	W 18 (max)	tag				
27	84711	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	W 15 (max)	tag				
28	84727	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	14 × 18	tag				
29	84774	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	15 × 18	tag				
30	84847	10	oval	concave	guilloche with channel of dots	18 × 21,5	tag	circular			Figure 5.4; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 7
31	89942	11	oval	concave	guilloche	18 × 22	clay sealing	Box sealing; four seal impressions on obv.; smudged, poorly preserved; Rev. flat wooden surface and wooden knob	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
32	89943	11	oval	concave	guilloche	17 × 20	clay sealing	Box sealing; four seal impressions on obv., one well preserved; Rev. flat wooden surface and wooden knob	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
33	89949	11	oval	concave	guilloche	19 × 22	clay sealing	Box sealing; three seal impressions on obv.; Rev. flat wooden surface and wooden knob	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
34	89950	11	oval	concave	guilloche	18 × 22	clay sealing	Box sealing; three seal impressions on obv.; Rev. shows edge of wooden object	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
35	89952	11	oval	concave	guilloche	19,5 × 22,5	clay sealing	Box sealing; five seal impressions on obv.; Rev. flat wooden surface with impression of cord	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
36	89955	11	oval	concave	guilloche	W 17 (max)	clay sealing	Box sealing; Rev. flat wooden surface and wooden knob	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
37	89973	11	oval	concave	guilloche	19 × 22,5	clay sealing	Rev. wooden knob and impressions of cord; probably box sealing	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		
38	K. 20574	11	oval	concave	guilloche	9 × 23	clay sealing	Box sealing; one frag. seal impression on obv.; Rev. shows impression of two flat wooden slats with a space in between them	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		Photo of Obv. and Rev. available at website: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_K-20574
39	90962	11?	oval	concave	guilloche		clay sealing	Box sealing; at least six seal impressions on obverse; possibly also in combination with another, very small seal type (two-tier authentication?)	large scorpion; guilloche characterized by large dots		Radner 2008: 495 f. with Fig. 8
40	84861	12	circular	concave	guilloche with channel	Dm 17 (max)	tag	circular			
41	89985	12	circular	concave	guilloche with channel	Dm 16	clay sealing	Box sealing; eight seal impressions on obv.; Rev. flat wooden surface with step and knob			

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
42	89987	12	circular	concave	guilloche with channel	Dm 16	clay sealing	Box sealing; three seal impressions on obv.; Rev. flat wooden surface with base of wooden knob			
43	82-5-22, 40	13	circular	concave	guilloche	Dm 18	textile docket	One seal impression on obv.	Scorpion with rosette in upper field; bordered by guilloche	658 (Asb)	Fig. 1, 9; Herbordt 1992: 252 (Ninive 199); pl. 20, 5; Fales and Postgate 1992: no. 93; Radner 2008: 502 Fig. 21
44	K. 1483	14	oval	concave	guilloche	11 × 17 (max)	textile docket	seal impression fragmentary and extremely worn on obv. of tablet	Scorpion with guilloche border surrounded by a channel (in this case forming a ridge higher than the seal design)		Fig. 1, 5; Herbordt 1992: 252 (Ninive 201); Fales and Postgate 1992: no. 98; Radner 2008: 502 Fig. 22; website: http://www.britishmuseum/collection/search?keyword=K.&keyword=1483
45	83-1-18, 764	15	oval	concave	channel with dots (= granulation)	15 × 8	textile docket	Two frag. seal impressions on obv.	Scorpion surrounded by a channel with impressed dots (= granulation of seal setting)		Fig. 1, 7; Herbordt 1992: 252 (Ninive 202); Fales and Postgate 1992: no. 100
46	82-3-23, 5159	16	circular	concave	garland	Dm 15,5	tag	circular			Fig. 1, 12; Figure 5.5; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 5; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 233 (drawing)
47	84539	17	circular	concave	garland	Dm 17	tag				
48	84559	17	circular	concave	garland		tag	circular			Collon 1995: pl. 12e; Radner 20: 496 fig. 6
49	84698	17	circular	concave	garland	Dm 14	tag				
50	84593	18	circular	concave	garland	Dm 15	tag		Scorpion smaller than on seal type no. 17		
51	84620	18	circular	concave	garland		tag		Scorpion smaller than on seal type no. 17		
52	84699	18	circular	concave	garland	Dm 15	tag	circular	Scorpion smaller than on seal type no. 17		Figure 5.6; Herbordt 1992: pl. 33, 2

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
53	84733	18	circular	concave	garland	Dm 15	tag		Scorpion smaller than on seal type no. 17		
54	84881	18	circular	concave	garland	Dm 16	tag		Scorpion smaller than on seal type no. 17		
55	84777	19	circular	concave	garland	Dm 15	clay sealing	Rev. poorly preserved; thus, type of container not recognizable	Scorpion is longer and thinner than the other examples		
56	84806	20	circular	concave	cuneiform inscription	Dm 16	tag		Inscription not legible; surrounded by a channel (= seal setting)		Radner 2008: 501 Fig. 19
57	84753		circular		channel	Dm 17	tag	oval	Image of scorpion?		
58	84768		oval		channel	19,5 × 27	clay sealing	Rev. Impression of cord			
59	84646		circular	concave	guilloche	Dm 21	tag				
60	84846		circular	concave	guilloche	Dm 15,5	clay sealing	Two seal impressions on obv.; Rev. impressions of cords			
61	84897		circular	concave	guilloche	Dm 14	tag		large scorpion		
62	50772		oval		guilloche	21 × 23	tag				Fig. 1, 3; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 232 c (drawing)
63	50797		oval		guilloche		tag				Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 232 (without drawing)
64	81-7-27, 153		oval		guilloche	18 × 23	tag		Seal impression is completely preserved		Fig. 1, 1; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 232 d (drawing)
65	Sm. 2210		oval		guilloche	13 × 25	tag				Fig. 1, 4; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 232 a (drawing)
66	Sm. 2385		circular	concave	guilloche	Dm 17	tag?	Tag (?) oval, no trace of cord	large scorpion		Fig. 1, 11; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 232 b (drawing)
67	84744		circular		guilloche (?) with channel	14 × 16,5	tag		extremely fragmentary and worn		
68	84826		circular?	concave	guilloche (?) with channel of dots	Dm 18	tag		very small scorpion, fragmentary		

No.	British Museum No.	Type No.	Seal shape	Seal surface	Border decoration	Preserved seal dimensions in mm	Carrier	Description of Sealed Object	Description of Seal	Date	Plate/Figure Reference; Previous Publication
69	81-7-27, 172		oval		guilloche with channel	18 × 20	tag		Seal impression is completely preserved		Fig. 1, 2; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106 cat. 232 e (drawing)
70	83-1-18, 567		oval	concave	guilloche with channel	8 × 11 (max)	textile docket	One seal impression on obv. of frag. tablet	Scorpion surrounded by guilloche border and a deep channel (= seal setting)	658 (Asb)	Fig. 1, 6; Herbordt 1992: 252 (Ninive 200); pl. 20, 6; Fales and Postgate 1992: no. 102; Radner 2008: 502 fig. 20 a
71	K. 1598		oval	concave	guilloche with channel	6 × 12	textile docket	One fragmentary seal impression on obv.	Preserved is only the edge of the seal showing a guilloche border surrounded by a channel. likely a scorpion seal		Fales and Postgate 1992: no. 101. Collation Herbordt: This does not appear to be a royal seal type as noted, but likely a scorpion seal (identical to 83-1-18, 567 = Herbordt 1992: pl. 20, 6 [Ninive 200])
72	89990		circular	concave	guilloche?	Dm 16	clay sealing	Box sealing; two seal impressions on obv.; Rev. flat wooden surface and cord impressions			
73	84713		circular		none visible	Dm 15	tag	ovoid	Image of scorpion? No guilloche visible		
74	81-2-4, 354						tag		scorpion seal impression (no description published)		Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 231 (without a description or drawing)
75	81-2-4, 365						tag		scorpion seal impression (no description published)		Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 231 (without a description or drawing)
76	81-2-4, 366						tag		scorpion seal impression (no description published)		Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 231 (without a description or drawing)
77	81-2-4, 369						tag		scorpion seal impression (no description published)		Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 231 (without a description or drawing)
78	81-7-27, 159						tag?		scorpion seal impression (no description published)		Mitchell and Searight 2008: 106, cat. 232 (without a description or drawing)

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Chapter 22:
The image of the city as a symbol and scene in Assyrian representation

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Abstract. The importance of the city in Assyrian culture, and the value attributed to the construction of its structures and spaces carried out by the kings in the ideological discourse of Assyrian kingship, attested in royal inscriptions from the beginning, had a specific function in the ideological discourse of Assyrian kingship. Narrations concerning the kings' building projects in the city show their commitment for the welfare of the society useful to give an institutional basis to their authority. For this reason, the almost complete absence of a corresponding iconographic version of the same contents of this discourse in the reliefs integrated, since the 9th century, into the royal palaces' architecture, is a historical phenomenon difficult to understand and explain.

The question is even more challenging when this absence of representation of Assyrian cities and buildings is compared with the appearance of images and symbols of enemy cities in monumental contexts at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE. This paper tries to trace the origin and creation of the iconographic sign of the city attested in the narrative sequence of the reliefs in the exploitation of the non-Assyrian toponymy quoted in the royal inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian period to suggest the formation of the empire. In the same way, the mute, linear forms of the cities appearing in the reliefs since the 10th-9th century, impossible to identify and to connect to other, foreign cultures, could have let their audience, including now Assyrians people too, to recognize them also as a representation of their own city, and themselves in the (revolting/resisting) enemy – if they revolted and/or resisted the Assyrian royal power. The reliefs show eventually that the king's power controls and is ready to destroy not only the enemies, but whoever opposes it.

Keywords: city, city walls, landscape, royal ideology, enemy, siege, toponymy, ethnonyms, iconography, narration.

Introduction

As in the case of Babylon (Dalley 1994), Ashur, the toponym of an urban settlement in the Northern Mesopotamian landscape, became and remained for the Assyrian state and empire, and for Assyrian civilization in general, the absolute ideogram, the visible sign meaning them, even when the political capital had moved away. In our perspective, the city name itself, coincident with a theonym—the name of the "polyadic" god, or of the numen loci—, almost unknown in the cuneiform mythological literature until quite a late period, evoked and built immediately a powerful relation among a god, a place, a people, then a land and an empire (van Driel 1969; Lambert 1983; Maul 2017; Villard 2023). No evidence or documentation from the prehistoric period exists regarding the god Ashur or the cult of Ashur at the site of Qal'at Sherqat. It is only from the Old Assyrian period, at the beginning of the second millennium BCE, that we can discern, in the written documentation, that the fact of belonging to that city, of depending on the authority of the local god and of his representative in the assembly, had become one of the major traits of the Assyrian identity for every citizen, every community associated with it, and for those living and working abroad (Larsen 1976). These relations superseded and seemingly supplanted the connections with clans, tribes, and other interregional affiliations, and demonstrated a considerable degree of resilience, despite the initial limited extent of the homeland, which became known as the *māt Aššur* (Postgate 1992). From the outset of the Middle Assyrian period, and with greater clarity during the Neo-Assyrian era, the political control over the "land of Ashur," now identified as a kingship, came to signify ideologically a universal, legitimate power. This was understood as the historical manifestation of the god Ashur's cosmic ownership and authority, residing in his city (Pongratz-Leisten 2017). According to the "Coronation ritual," which is dated to that period, the head of the cultic personnel of the temple of Ashur, upon slapping the new king's face, publicly reminds him that the royal authority over Ashur belongs to the god Ashur (and to nobody else). The palace elites, the aristocracy of Assyrian society, urge him to expand his domain, the "land of Ashur," as the primary objective of his kingship (Parpola 2017: 15–16, l.24–36). These elements are so intricately intertwined with religious and ideological references that it becomes increasingly challenging to discern their articulation and to reconstruct, from an historical perspective, the various stages of the development and construction of such a sign.

The king and the city

This link was so powerful that, in contrast to Babylon, when the city of Ashur and the other later capitals of the Assyrian state and empire fell under their enemies' attack in the 7th century BCE, not only the political and economic system they managed, but also the culture, religion, literature, and even the language of that society appeared to collapse and disappear. They were erased from the historical record, leaving only traces that are difficult to recognize, even if the site was reoccupied and the cult of Ashur was revived for a while. However, since the late 19th century, the discovery of the ruins of Assyrian cities (Larsen 1996), including Nineveh, Calah, Dur-Sharrukin, as well as Ashur, with their palaces, temples, libraries, and archives, has enabled the reconstruction of Assyrian history and civilization as the product of a completely urbanized society, in which the power was exclusively managed by city elites. This specific urban character undoubtedly facilitated the Western world's acknowledgment of the Assyrian state as an archetype, a model, of every other empire, such as Rome, which subsequently attempted to control and merge disparate societies and peoples. Assyrian royal inscriptions, composed over a period of more than a millennium (Tadmor 1981 and 1997; Fales 1999-2001; Frahm 2019), as well as other economic and literary texts, provide a comprehensive account of the kings' building interventions in the city. They consistently invested in the construction, restoration, and expansion of urban structures and architectural elements in the capital cities and regions integrated into the empire. These included palaces, temples, and city walls (Lackenbacher 1982; Novotny 2018). These construction projects were as crucial for the kings' image and legitimacy as their military operations and territorial expansion. Indeed, they may have been even more significant, as they provided a tangible manifestation of their commitment to the well-being of Assyrian society. The construction or reconstruction of parts of the city enabled each monarch to demonstrate his power and intelligence in navigating the situation, as well as his trust in the enduring presence of the Assyrian royal authority in the landscape (Russell 2017).

The inscriptions provide insight into the space attributed to the narrative of building operations, as well as the vibrant appeal of every king to the attention and respect of future rulers of the heritage material left to them. This appeal is evident in the menaces and maledictions for those who would not listen. These royal activities, beneficial and meaningful in the present as well as in future, served to inscribe Assyrian kingship in time, space, and history. Since the end of the second millennium BCE, short and generic narratives about the king's investments to improve agriculture and herding in the conquered regions, as an effect of their colonization, were inserted into the royal inscriptions (Liverani 2012). However, the restoration and construction of buildings in the city, particularly in the capital cities, including Niniveh, were the primary means of demonstrating the king's concern for the well-being of the population, indirectly also indicating the military protection he provided to the Assyrian society. According to the ideological discourse, a situation of siege and attack of the capital by a (foreign) enemy invading the state could not, even in theory, be imagined or evoked. It can be argued that the construction of the Assyrian city walls was mentioned in the inscriptions as its main intention was to establish a visual representation of the city and its authority (Van De Mieroop 2016), as well as to delineate a distinct realm. The Mesopotamian Underworld was delineated by powerful walls too (Horowitz 1998: 268–292). The urban layout was characterized by imposing walls, gates, and towers (Figure 1), which served to regulate and monitor the movement of people in and out of the city. These structures were designed to recognize and distinguish between different identities, social groups, and statuses, and to protect the population from external threats, whether demonic or apocalyptic in nature (Halama 2011; Sollee 2020). Another wall often delineated in Assyrian cities the distinct space of the citadel, reserved to the location of the royal palaces and temples. It is possible that the relocation of Assyrian capitals along the Tigris Valley over time contributed to the city of Ashur not being considered the "geographic" center of the world, either explicitly or ideologically. This position was instead acknowledged to Babylon (Horowitz 1998: 20–42), the residence of Marduk, king of the pantheon and creator of the universe. In the royal inscriptions, Ashur city and the other Assyrian capitals, residence of the king and the leader of the empire, are represented as the starting points of every line and link in the economic and political system.

Cities and landscapes, culture vs nature?

It is also useful to consider the importance attributed to urban building projects and realizations undertaken in the Assyrian Empire in its cultural context. In accordance with the ancient Mesopotamian conceptions as evidenced in Sumerian traditions, cities are not to be structurally opposed to the natural landscape. Rather, a form of continuity is posited to keep them together. They represent the extension and articulation in the natural environment of the temples, residences of the major gods, owners of the earth, and masters of all the forces pervading the environment itself (Novák 2014; Masetti-Rouault 2019a). In the Sumerian King List, cities (and men) existed before kingship was established, descending from heaven to organize and manage them together (Jacobsen 1939: 71, l.1–6). In the lamentation texts, cities are destroyed and then recreated again,

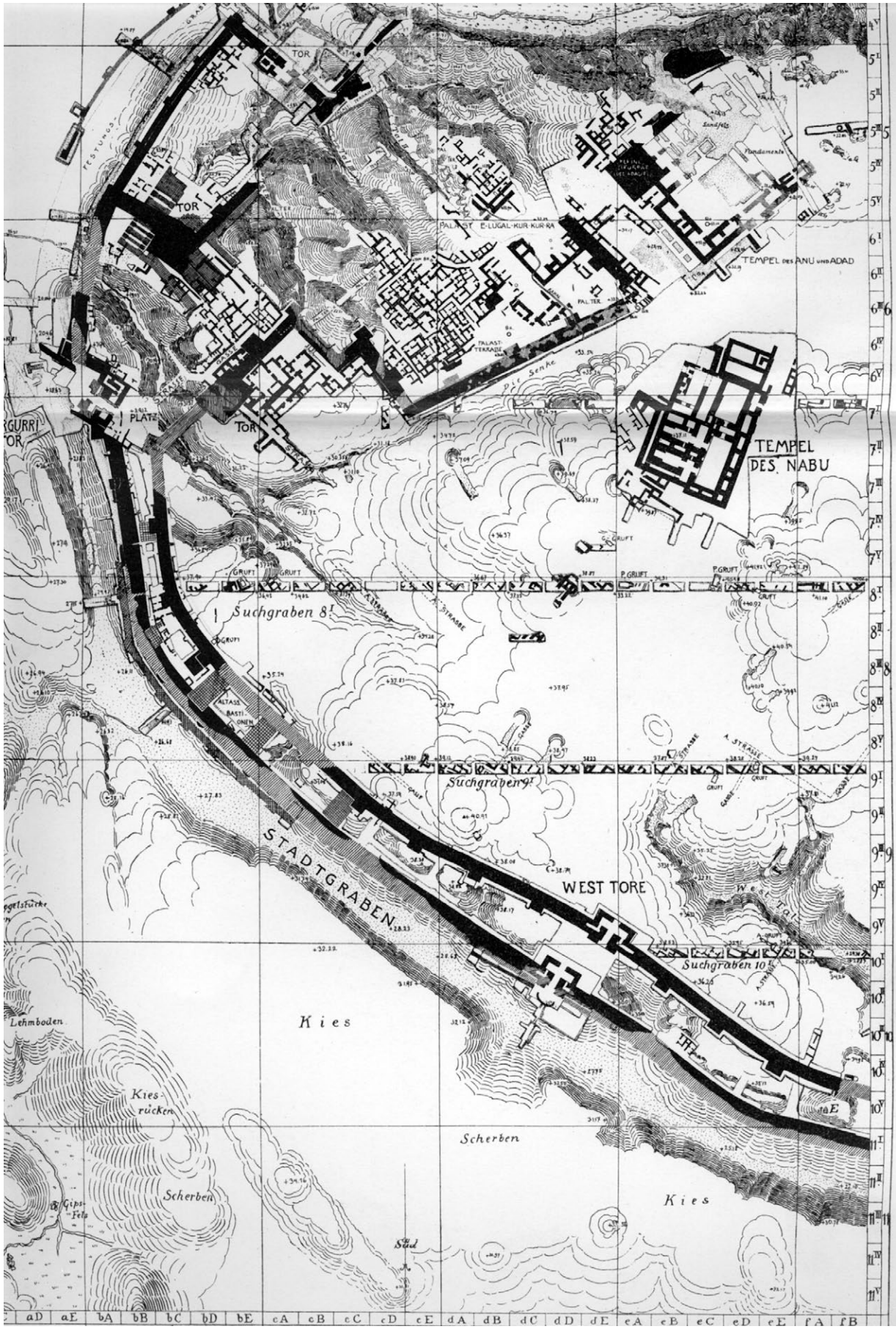

Figure 1a. Urban walls in Assur (after Andrae 1913: taf. III).

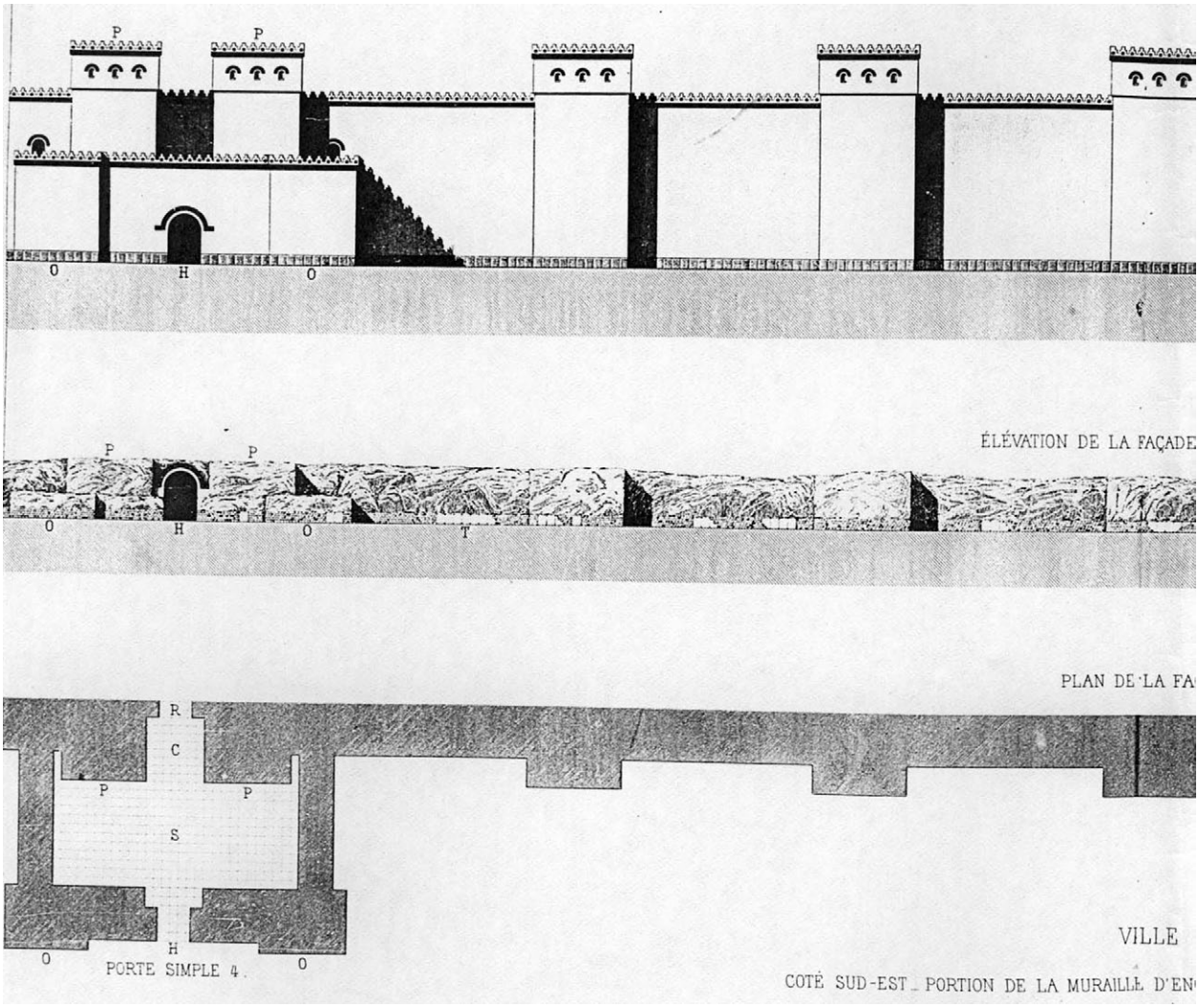

Figure 1b. Urban walls in Dur Sharrukin (after Place 1867: pl.8).

according to the will and judgment of the gods. The Assyrian King List begins before the city, the capital, existed. It states that "kings lived in the tents" at least in its Amorite version (Glassner 2023: 202–208). In this context, the foundation of the city by a king is not as significant or "sacred" an event as, for instance, the founding of Rome, where time counting commenced *ab urbe condita.* In cuneiform traditions, the emergence of a city within a specific landscape is regarded as an indirect consequence of the residence in a temple of a polyadic deity, the king or queen of the local pantheon, with their entourage, and the services needed. His/her court reflected the presence, and the power, in the city of the representatives of political authority, as exemplified by the Uruk vase (Steinkeller 1999). One example of these conceptions is the case of the foundation of Babylon, as detailed in the later poem *Enuma Elish.* In this text, the project is attributed to Marduk only, even if carried out eventually by all the gods of the pantheon (Lambert 2013: 104–105, t.V, l. 119–130; and 112–113, t.VI, l. 47–64). Nevertheless, there are significant exceptions: in the last part of the third millennium, Sargon of Akkad was recognized as the builder/founder of an empire with the same name as its capital, a city which, however, almost disappeared from the maps in the course of time (Jakobsen 1939: 110–111, l. 30–36). On the other hand, Sargon of Akkad's inscriptions mark his victories by mentioning the destruction of the city walls of his enemies (Frayne 1993: 10, l.12–22). During the Middle Bronze II–III, Amorite kings also began to build new settlements, sometimes bearing the name of their founder in their toponyms (Masetti-Rouault 2019a: 368); these settlements were shown to have a special but limited function in the context of state policy, being the king's *dūru,* "fortified place," or his "harbor/trading post," *kāru.* In later times, Assyrian kings did the same when they built new capitals or gave new names to colonies or conquered cities to signal their integration into the empire (Pongratz-Leisten 1997). However, the taboo of founding a city by a king as a potential act of *hubris*, of royal arrogance, was never too far removed when it came to a political capital. In two cases attested

in Assyrian history where the names of the new cities/capitals emphasized the personal agency of the kings in the enterprise – Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta and Dur-Sharrukin, respectively – the result was the same: the two founders met a comparable fate, to die "before their time" by a bad death (Masetti-Rouault 2023: 239–240). In both cases, the rapid abandonment of the new foundations as political centers of the empire after their deaths confirms this ideological assessment of events.

If not a foundation, what Mesopotamian tradition and state ideology imposed on kings was their constant intervention in the construction of urban structures, first temples and later city walls – whatever organized urban orientation and image. As the Etana legend explains, giving a narrative version to the structure described in the Sumerian list of kings, kingship is sent down from the heavens by the gods and lands in the cities to intervene in their management. Etana, the first king chosen, organizes society – the people who live and work there – and gives them culture and religion, the "festivals " (Saporetti 1990: 48–51). The process begins with the creation of a temple, followed by the (more difficult) establishment of a dynasty, which may include the construction of its house, the royal palace – a theme rarely evoked as such in mythology, unless, as in *Enuma Elish*, the project concerns a divine residence. While for the walls of the city mainly enough labor and clay for the bricks are needed, the double program of building temples and a palace, recognized by every king, is carried out by exploiting the best of what nature as well as his power offers him: royal inscriptions detail the qualities and the origin of the materials used in the construction, often requiring long travels and (military) campaigns in distant lands to collect them (Pongratz-Leisten 2020). While art and knowledge, as well as technology, play their part in the results of these monumental works, the Assyrian king's building activities show that he masters not only culture, but nature itself, all over the world.

In the standard Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh poem, the king of Uruk first builds the city wall, then the temple of Ishtar, among the works he does when he returns home after his long journey to find wisdom and knowledge, thus defining the division of urban space between gods and humans (George 2003: 538–539, t. 1, l.1–23; Pinnock 2013). Large areas were left empty, not transformed into plots for building, to have a space where the rural or semi-nomadic population could settle when needed. In this "stream of tradition" (Oppenheim 1977: 13–25), even if they did not decide of their foundation, the Assyrian kings invested their energies and the state and crown wealth accumulated through their territorial conquests in the (seemingly) global planification of the urban spaces of the capitals (Masetti-Rouault 2019a) (Figure 2). They built or restored city walls, gates, temples, monuments, public services – such as water distribution (Masetti-Rouault 2018) – and royal palaces. Even when the political capital of the empire was established outside the original core of the *māt Aššur*, first at Calah, then at Niniveh, each king respected his duty to restore, enlarge, and improve the city of Ashur, the only recognized religious center of the country and the site of the royal tombs. When establishing new settlements, even in conquered and colonized lands, or modifying the architectural structures of conquered cities, Assyrian kings affirm in their inscriptions that they know how to organize and manage the natural and social environment to make life and economy sustainable and more profitable for the whole society (Liverani 2012). It was freely admitted in the inscriptions that all these structures were ephemeral, since the building materials were not eternal, and therefore they had to be repaired, replaced, and adapted to new conditions over time. For this reason, even in the historical Assyrian capitals, kings could change the form, layout, position, dimensions, and construction techniques of the buildings that defined the urban space, but their function was forever established.

Images and Forms of the city

The dramatic importance of the city, and of the destiny of any urban and peri-urban structure for the history and ideology of the Assyrian state, is recognized and can be tested on various levels, using different sets of data, both archaeological and textual. For this reason, it is surprising to realize the rarity of iconographic representations of Assyrian cities and monuments, for example, in the bronze and stone reliefs with historical content installed in the royal palaces of the Neo-Assyrian kings (9th-7th century BCE). There were other materials and objects in which Assyrian urban forms could have been reproduced: for example, some royal crowns represented as a ring of walls with towers on stone reliefs or glazed bricks, which also adorned the heads of Assyrian queens (Matthiae 1996a: 1.2; Micale 2011: tav. 45; Pinnock 2018), as well as on textiles. Walled crowns are also to be found on the head of some goddesses, like Kubaba at Karkemish (Marchetti and Peker 2019: 88), as well as, later, Atargatis and Tyche at Antioch, Tyre and other cities. In the palace reliefs of the later Neo-Assyrian period, (clay?) maquettes modeled in the same "crown " form are presented to the Assyrian king (Figure 3), possibly to signify the submission of a foreign city (Micale 2011: tav. 46–47). However, they haven't survived in sufficient quantity or quality to allow a reconstruction.

While the iconography of Mesopotamian archaic seals shows the image of tall buildings, possibly temples, around which enemies are killed and – already – corpses fall to the ground (Amiet 1953: 27, fig. 3), the theme seems to remain isolated, rarely if ever

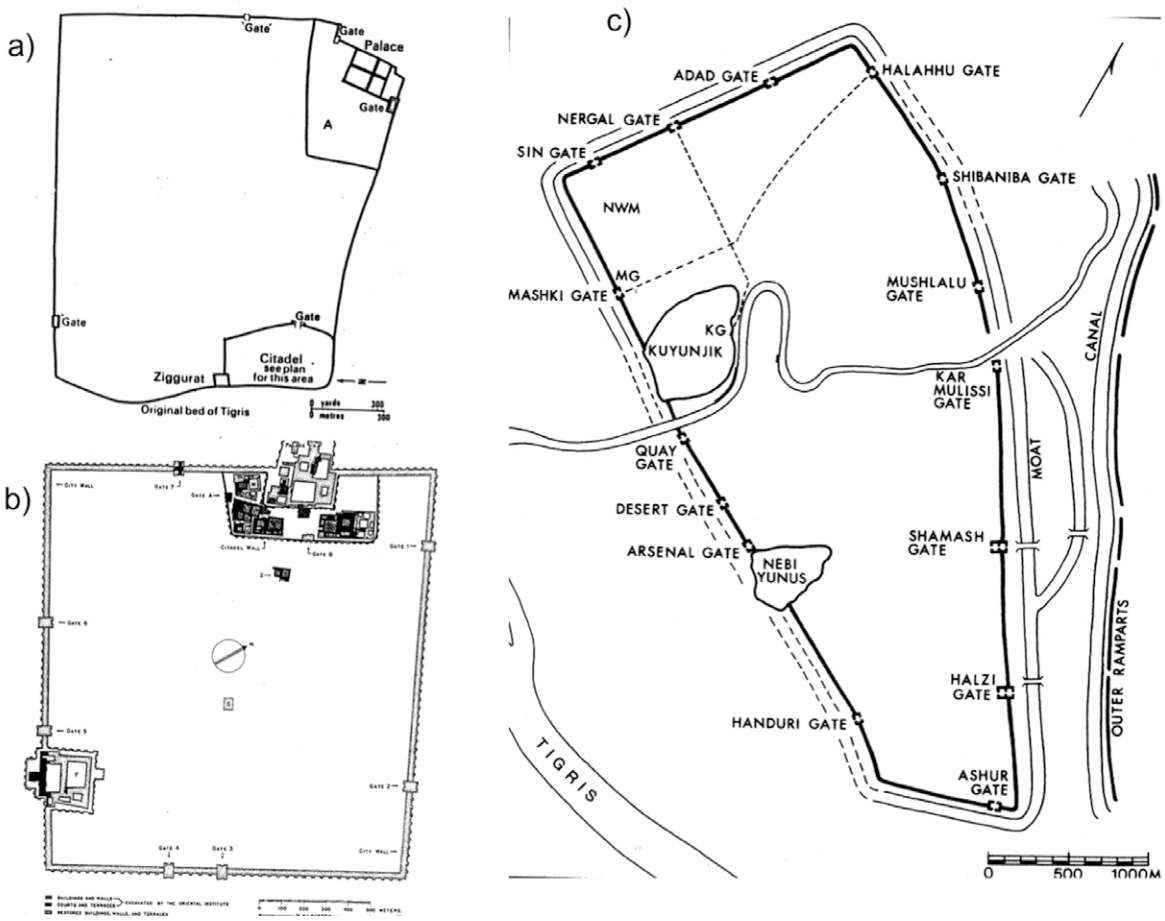

Figure 2. Planification of the capital urban spaces in Neo-Assyrian time at approximately the same scale: a) Nimrud; b) Dur Sharrukin; c) Nineveh (composition of the author).

Figure 3. Palace of Sargon II: bas relief of maquettes in the shape of "crown" representing foreign cities (after Albenda 1984: fig.29).

Figure 4. Assur, 13th-12th century, cylinder seal VA 05362 (Credit: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum / Olaf M. Teßmer, CC BY-SA 4.0).

documented later. Some Early Bronze Age seals show siege towers in action, referring to siege situations, but without any localization in an urban landscape (Nadali 2009). A limited number of representations of buildings, again interpreted as temples, are attested in Middle Assyrian glyptic (Figure 4), but it is not easy to establish the continuity of the iconographic tradition linking them to the Neo-Assyrian stone reliefs (Micale 2010 and 2011: tav. 40–41). The iconography attested on the White Obelisk, dated to the late 11th century BCE, the intermediate period before the emergence of a new culture and political behavior since the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, is the first monument to convey in its forms and rhythms the main elements of the ideological discourse of Assyrian kingship and its imperialistic content (Reade 1975; Pittman 1996). Its political message is expressed through the narrative of royal military successes (Sollberger 1974), while the production of royal inscriptions in the last part of the Iron I period is attested only in a discontinuous way. Instead of showing only the body or corpse of the enemy, as in the traditional Mesopotamian sculptural historiographic tradition, as in the "Vultures" stele of Eannatum, or in that of Naram-Sin (Winter 1999), or, closer in time, in the "Broken Obelisk" (Ornan 2007), the iconography of the White Obelisk already uses the representation of the layout of the enemy's city walls to highlight, in the narrative the events, the extension and the points of application of the Assyrian king's power (Dolce 2022). In fragmentary conditions, the cuneiform text inscribed on the top of the stele is extracted from the corpus of royal inscriptions, but there is no way to consider it as the reference of the narrative illustrated by the columns of reliefs on the four sides of the stele. Some toponyms of cities attacked and conquered by the Assyrian king are quoted, but the images of the cities are not identified by captions (Reade 1975: 139–140).

The not only celebratory, but also obviously communicative function of the "White Obelisk" reliefs and their impact on the Assyrian elites – and possibly on a wider audience – show, in our view, how this kind of artistic production of the palace chancery, now exploiting iconography, became one of the preferred mass media, parallel to or complementary to the royal inscriptions (Liverani 2014; Bagg 2016; Nadali 2019a). With a precedent in the relief decorating the bases of the throne of Tukulti-Ninurta I (Battini 2016: 38, fig. 4.2), the images of the White Obelisk, if its early date is accepted, announce the production of reliefs on bronze bands and on stone decorating buildings and royal palaces since the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (Reade 1979a and 1979b). From the beginning, the place occupied by the representation of the enemy cities in this type of monuments is evident (Figure 5), using a narrative structure to convey their message (Jacoby 1991; Micale 2008; Albenda 2018). If, as alternatively proposed (cf. Matthiae 1996b: 56; Micale 2011: 127–132), the monument is the product of Ashurnasirpal II's artistic workshops, these images must be read in the same context. The series of stone reliefs in the palace and temples built during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II at Calah, as well as the reliefs on bronze bands on the gates of the palace and temple found at Balawat/

Figure 5. Detail of enemy cities in the White Obelisk (after Wikimedia, CC-BY-2.0).

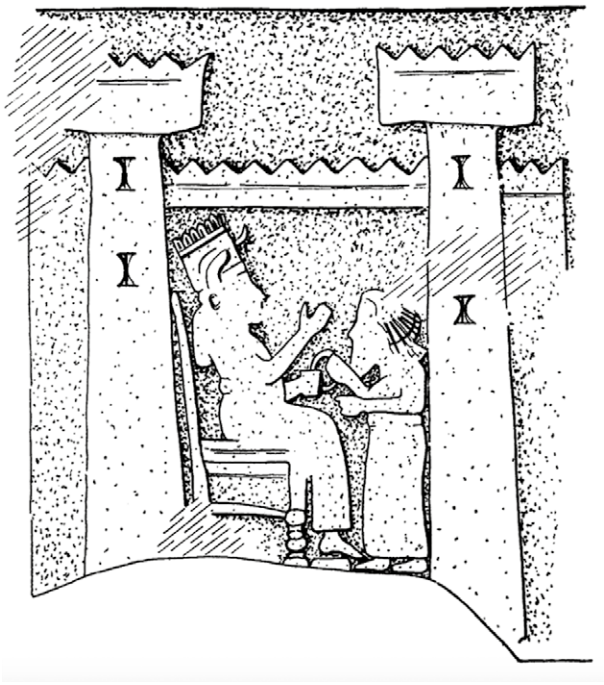

Figure 6. The *bit-nathi* of the temple of Ishtar, detail of Scene 8, frame A3 (after Sollberger 1974: 237–238, fig.1).

Imgur-Enlil (Reade 1979a; Matthiae 1996a: 61–74; Curtis and Tallis eds 2008; Micale 2011: 121–127), constitute the main source of information about the new visual messages about Assyrian kingship based on the diachronic structures of the narratives – which in turn reflect the sequence of spaces and times shared with the royal inscriptions (Marcus 1995; Masetti-Rouault 2019b). His son, Shalmaneser III, followed the same artistic project by installing another decorated gate in the same location at the Balawat site (Marcus 1987; Micale 2008; Curtis and Tallis 2015). Its background, the authority of ancient artistic traditions – such as the imperial Hittite and post-Hittite reliefs of southern Anatolia or the Kassite murals – must certainly be considered as models for the new Assyrian artistic trend (Güterbock 1957; Reade 1979a; Gilibert 2004; Battini 2016). However, the quality and expressiveness of the Neo-Assyrian sculptural style, paradigm of all later creations recognized as true "Assyrian" art, can only be understood if one realizes the conscious continuity in the perception of iconography as a communicative tool, exploiting narrative structures, already seen in the "White Obelisk" as well as in the Balawat bronze bands. In these reliefs, as well as in the famous later tradition of the sculpted slabs decorating the walls of late Neo-Assyrian palaces, Assyrian cities are almost invisible: even when art historians have tried to recognize some of them, the identification is often uncertain and remains ambiguous. Bearing in mind that the White Obelisk was found by Rassam at Niniveh, in the archaeological context of the temple of the polyadic goddess, only one scene tries to represent – with a new method, cutting practically into the walls – a part of the interior of the temple of Ishtar – the *bit-nathi*, as the inscription explains, where the Assyrian king enters to celebrate a rite (Sollberger 1974: 237–238, fig.1; Reade 1975: pl. XXX) (Figure 6).

The city and its city wall in Assyria: Iconography

After centuries of absence, the urban environment of Niniveh reappears, always in a limited way, in the representations of the landscape of the royal garden decorating the wall of Ashurbanipal's northern palace, which include buildings and monuments; some larger views of the royal residence and activities in Niniveh are offered by the scenes of people watching the spectacle and rite of a royal hunt, killing lions (Reade 1998). The image of the idyllic atmosphere organized to protect the rest of Ashurbanipal and his queen under the pergola in the palace garden is again related to the royal city (Matthiae 1996b: 81). Equally rare are representations of other Assyrian cities. One of the oldest examples has been recognized in the view of Imgur-Enlil, inserted into the iconography of the bronze bands created during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II for the gates of the

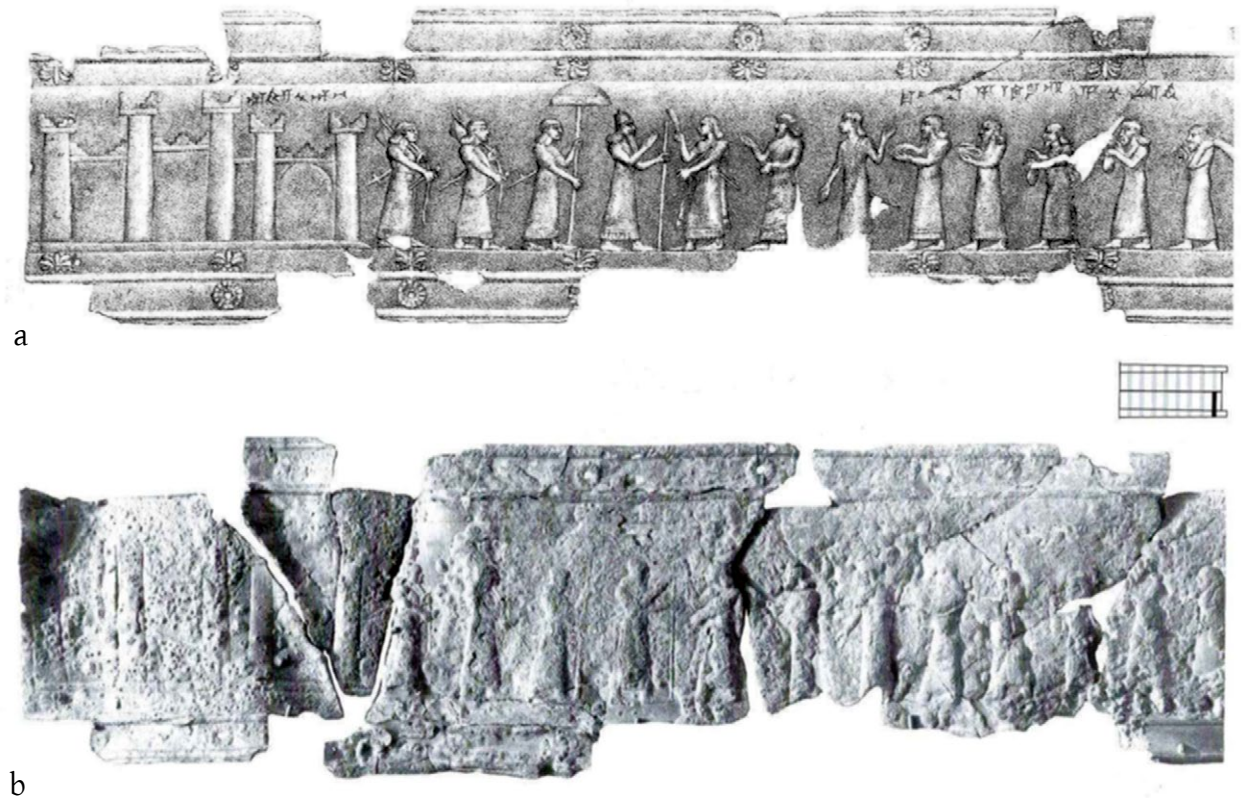

Figure 7a–b. Imgur-Enlil I in the Balawat Gates, a) drawing; b) photo (after Curtis, Davies, Tallis and Walker 2008: figs 73–74).

palace and a temple in a city sporting the same name, Imgur-Enlil (Figure 7a-b) (Tucker 1994; Curtis, Davies, Tallis and Walker 2008: 62, figs. 73–74; Micale 2011: 127), close to Calah. In that case, the architectural forms and proportions used in the same reliefs to denote the objects of the Assyrian army's attack and conquest would have also represented an Assyrian urban layout. However, the site identified by a caption (Russell 1999: 55–61) that quotes the toponym Imgur-Enlil, is not the city itself where the image has been found. The toponym identifies instead a settlement in the Lower Middle Euphrates valley, target of the king's campaign (Clancier 2020: 207, 209–226). No other meaningful details distinguish it from other foreign landscapes that appear in the same series of reliefs. Ashurnasirpal II, standing outside the walls of that city, receives the homage of his court and his government. In the same type of scene showing the procession of tributaries and prisoners of war in front of the Assyrian king outside the city walls, some of these cities, not identified by any toponym, empty, can be interpreted as already "Assyrian" because no fighting is shown on the walls (for example, Curtis, Davies, Tallis and Walker 2008: 67, figs. 69–70).

A later distant view of the city walls of Nineveh (Figure 8), possibly showing the palace (Matthiae 1996a: 9. 15), and the frontal view of the wall of Arba'ilu with its moat and, at the top of the citadel, at the entrance to the Temple of Ishtar, the silhouette of the Assyrian king (MacGinnis 2013: 80), can be compared in their general structure and layout to the standard image of any enemy city attested in the reliefs, albeit presented in different dimensions and proportions. In the case of Arba'ilu, the scene recalls the Old Babylonian iconography of the Dadusha stele depicting the king of Eshnunna killing his enemy, Bunu-Ishtar, king of the Arba'ilu region, at the top of the double circle of the city walls of the city of Qabra (MacGinnis 2013: 54) (Figure 9). Unlike what happens in the secrecy of the palace, this position – the top of the city walls – had already been identified in literary texts as a place offering maximum visibility, both within the city and from outside, in front of the foreigners or enemies surrounding it. For this reason, it is chosen by kings to make significant, even dramatic appearances: in the Sumerian cycle of Gilgamesh, the mere presence of the king of Uruk on the city wall, through the visible power of his glory, determines the defeat of the army of Akka, king of Kish, which besieges the city (Vanstiphout 1986; Katz 1993). During the reign of Esarhaddon, the king of Shubria shows his desperation from the city wall of Uppume by reading the message of condemnation sent to him by Esarhaddon (Leichty 2011: 81, l. 5–6). Later, in biblical tradition (2 Kings 3:21–27), the king of Moab ritually killed his son over the city wall of his capital

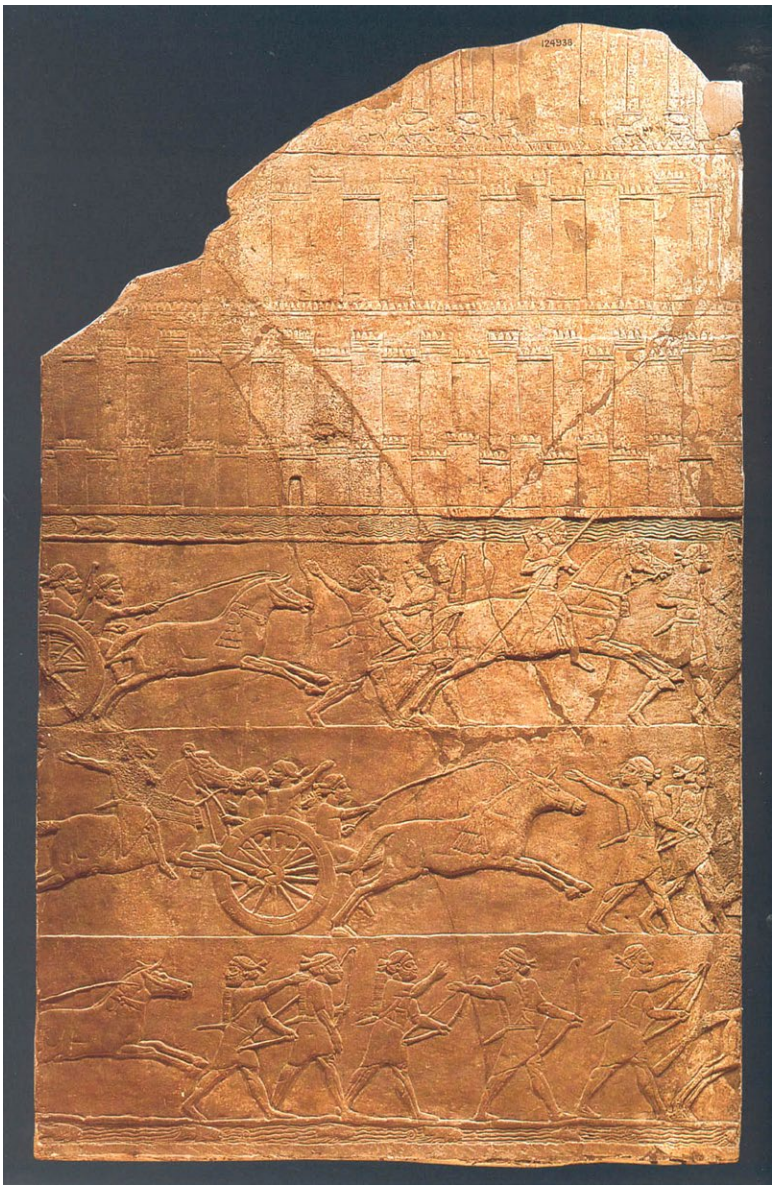

Figure 8. The city walls of Nineveh, possibly showing the palace (after Matthiae 1998: fig. on p.90).

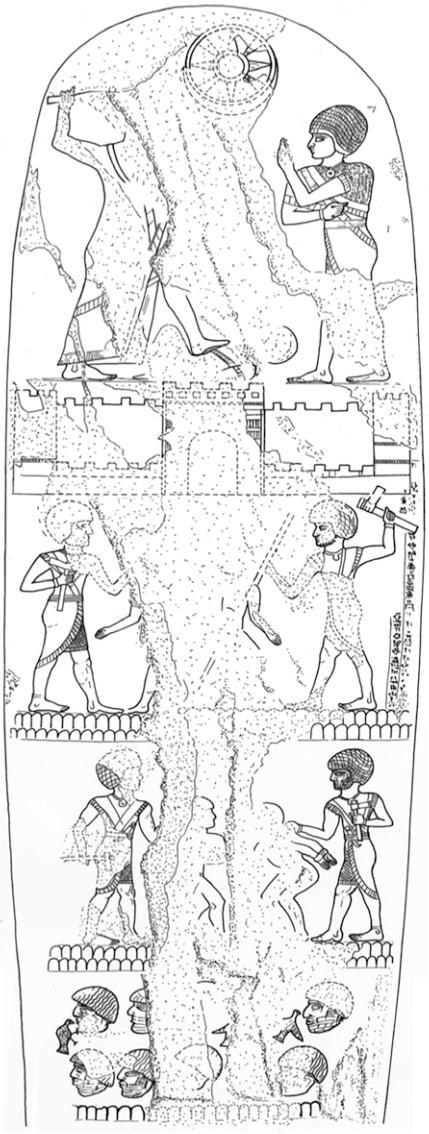

Figure 9. Dadusha stele (after Suter 2018: fig.1)

as the last political act left to him after the defeat of his army. He does this in front of the Israelite army, which, shocked, abandons the siege. In all the Assyrian reliefs, on the battlements, on the top of his city wall, the enemies fought bravely but in vain against the Assyrian special forces who attacked the cities from all directions (Figure 10). Dead bodies fall outside along the walls, showing the cruelty of the attackers, the severity of the punishment for the "rebels" against the Assyrian power (Baggs 2016). In the same position, looking out, women weep and lament the massacre that is foreseen and underway: their gestures show their panic (Cifarelli 1998). The people of Jerusalem, standing on the walls of the city, already starving, hear the seemingly more peaceful appeal of Sennacherib's representative, who announces hard times for them (2 Kings 18: 26–27).

Although impressive, the late Neo-Assyrian reliefs showing details of "Assyrian" cities and major buildings are quite isolated, if not unique. Since the first discoveries, the proposed reconstructions of these architectures are certainly based on solid archaeological documentation, but they also imply a great deal of interpretation as well as extrapolation (Micale 2019). Beyond what we get in the palace reliefs – almost exclusively in those found at Niniveh – we have almost no other view of an Assyrian urban landscape, of the facade of a palace, a temple, or a simple house, shown in its elevation, allowing us to see it as passersby

Figure 10. Palace of Sennacherib, Room XXXVIII, besieged city in Armenia (?)
(after Barnett and Bleibtreu 1998: pl.359 n.448).

would have perceived it and remembered it as part of their own environment. This kind of images can therefore be considered marginal in Neo-Assyrian art and iconography, as in other ancient Near Eastern cultures: few documents have survived that reproduce "Assyrian" architectural forms in the same way as in the reliefs, for example in glyptic art (Micale 2011: tav. 42,5.6, tav. 43–44, tav. 48b). On the other hand, the only Assyrian architectural / topographical units in the corpus of reliefs – but absent in the royal inscriptions – that could balance, in the rhythm of the narrative, the appearance of the image of the besieged enemy cities, are the representations of the mobile camps of the king and his army (Figure 11) (Micale and Nadali 2004; Micale 2011: 103–105). Found in palatial contexts, this specific icon of Assyrian royal power is first attested in the bronze reliefs of Shalmaneser III at Balawat and later in those of Sennacherib at Nineveh. These images reproduce, in a zenithal perspective from above – as opposed to the frontal view of the enemy city walls – the regular but different geometric forms of an all-Assyrian settlement installed, for a time, in a foreign land. It is considered the mobile palace of the king, who has a special place and pavilion in the camp, but it is also a city, the residence of a population of soldiers and other personnel who accompany them (excluding women). These specialists are needed to carry out not only military tasks, but also normal household activities, such as cooking, as well as regular religious ceremonies – just as if they were at home, in the capital. While the movements reserved to the Assyrians, of leaving and returning to the camp, of fighting and resting, are represented, the calm sequence and rhythm of the activities of the logistic and religious personnel insist on the feeling of security and peace in this new delimited space, *intra muros*. In fact, it creates a strong contrast with the panicked desperation and terror of the enemies who fought nearby on the battlements to defend their city, but also with the atrocities committed by the Assyrian soldiers around the walls to show the reality of the conquest.

Figure 11. Palace of Sennacherib, Room XXXVI, mobile camps of the king and his army in the Lachish siege (from Barnett and Bleibtreu 1998: pl. 348).

The city and its urban wall, outside Assyria: the enemy's settlements

The drastic limitation of iconographic sources depicting Assyrian cities with their topographical details can be better evaluated when compared to the mass of narratives integrated into royal inscriptions about the kings' building activities. But it is even stranger and more inexplicable when also compared to the imposing presence in Neo-Assyrian reliefs – until the very end of the Sargonid period – of a series of urban skylines marking other, foreign landscapes, more than a hundred (Jacoby 1991; Micale 2011; Albenda 2018). Beginning decisively in the 9th century, as a specific development of Assyrian official iconography during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, the cities of the enemy occupy a specific space in these monumental decorations, some of them depicted as still fighting under Assyrian attack – a spectacle to be seen and admired, of interest to the king himself –, others already conquered, on the way to being destroyed, abandoned by their inhabitants, deported under the control of the Assyrian army. The skyline of the enemy city walls, marked by battlements, towers and gates, is sometimes the scene under which the parade of the victorious Assyrian army is inserted, marking the end of the military event. The king is shown acknowledging the success of his army, the submission of the enemy, and the entry of prisoners, tribute, and booty into the crown's possession.

Since their first systematic appearance, the cities of the enemy are often represented in connection with a specific geographical landscape, the most familiar to an Assyrian audience: the mountains (Figure 12). This environment is associated with connotative aspects of the closer regions that are the object of the Assyrian king's strategies (Gunter 1982; Winter 1999; Thomason 2001), attested in the royal inscriptions, where the heroic aspects of the king's march through the highest, impassable mountains are celebrated as a manifestation of his virile legitimacy, as is the crossing of the great rivers while they are in flood, when their waters are at their highest point. It is interesting to note that royal rituals celebrated to cleanse the Assyrian king of

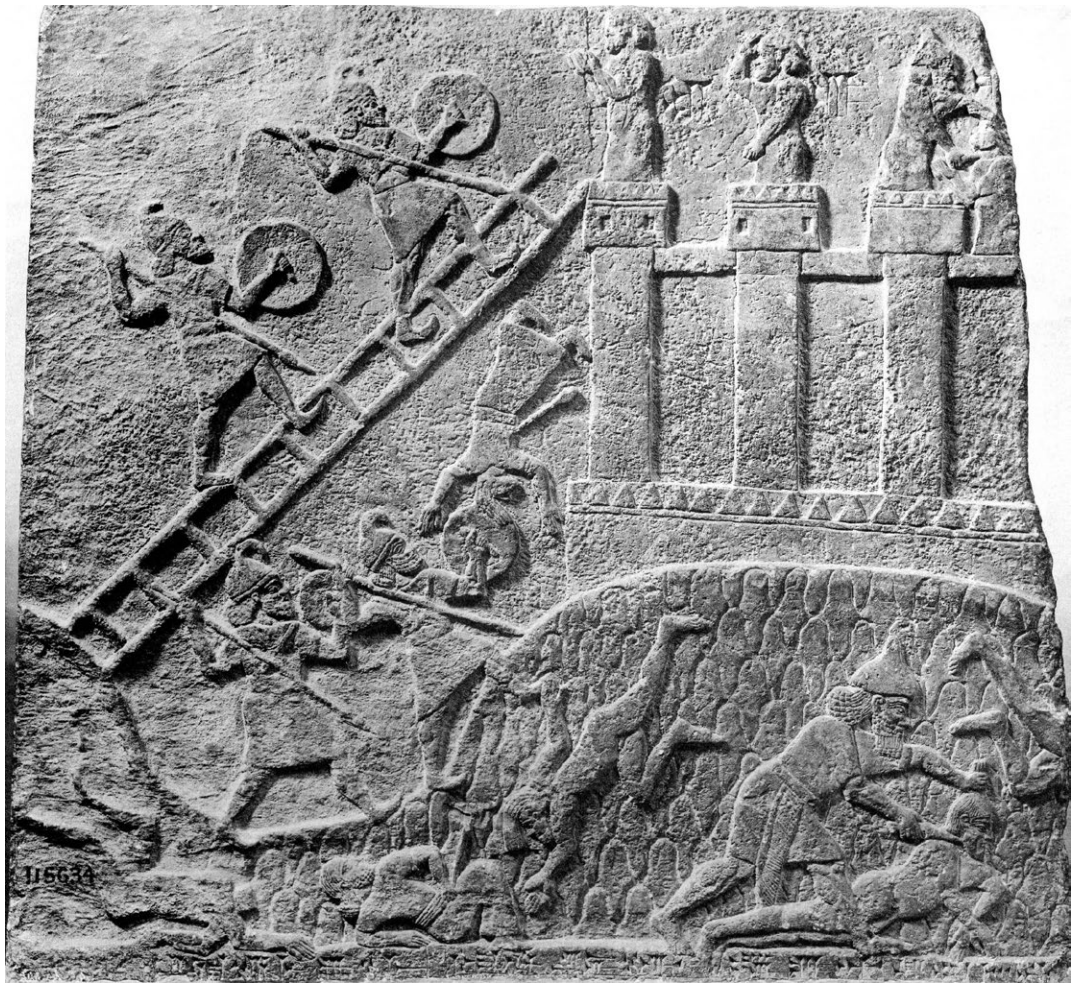

Figure 12. Besieged city in a mountainous region (after Smith 1938: pl.13).

any impurity later evoke the same kind of landscape reproduced for the rite as a model, a maquette – mountains and rivers, without cities – that the king must cross to symbolize the total expansion of his world (Ambos 2013: 252–253). In narratives of military operations in northern Mesopotamia, in Anatolia as well as to the east, towards the Zagros (Fuchs 2017), or in Syria and the Levant (Bagg 2017), cities are often located in this kind of landscape, the iconographic version showing them as settled on top of hills or mountains (Figure 13), their fortified structures visible from afar (cf. Micale 2011: cat. 17, 26–27, tav. 12.1). In the reliefs, they are sometimes located near water, a river; to the west, cities on the Mediterranean coast are shown surrounded by the sea, so that the landscape itself seems to offer them natural protection (Micale 2011: cat. 18). To be always visible from afar (frontally), even when built on the plain, the foreign cities are shown as founded on a mound, represented by a curved line, or alternatively on rectangular (anthropic?) terraces. This situation may reflect their function as capitals or royal residences, but the (only visual) reference to the presence of a mound may also indicate an awareness of the history, the ages, of these foreign cities, revealing the Assyrian perception of the evolution of their own settlements. In the bronze reliefs of Shalmaneser III at Balawat, representations of the Babylonian landscape already reveal a decision to insist on the perception of a very different environment, identified by the presence of palm trees and other typically "southern", exotic vegetation (King 1915: pl. LXI–LXV; Frahm 2017 b and 2017c). This geographical, climatic, and possibly also cultural otherness of the "Babylonian" world is largely attested and exploited in the reliefs of the Sargonid dynasty. Marked also by some idiomatic architecture of the settlements, this kind of environment will be extended to denote all the southern lands, where, however, the plains and the marshes often offer new possibilities to represent fights and battles outside the cities and capitals (Nadali 2010).

The inclusion of the reliefs of these landscapes in the narrative, which are characterized not only by natural and geographical features but also systematically by

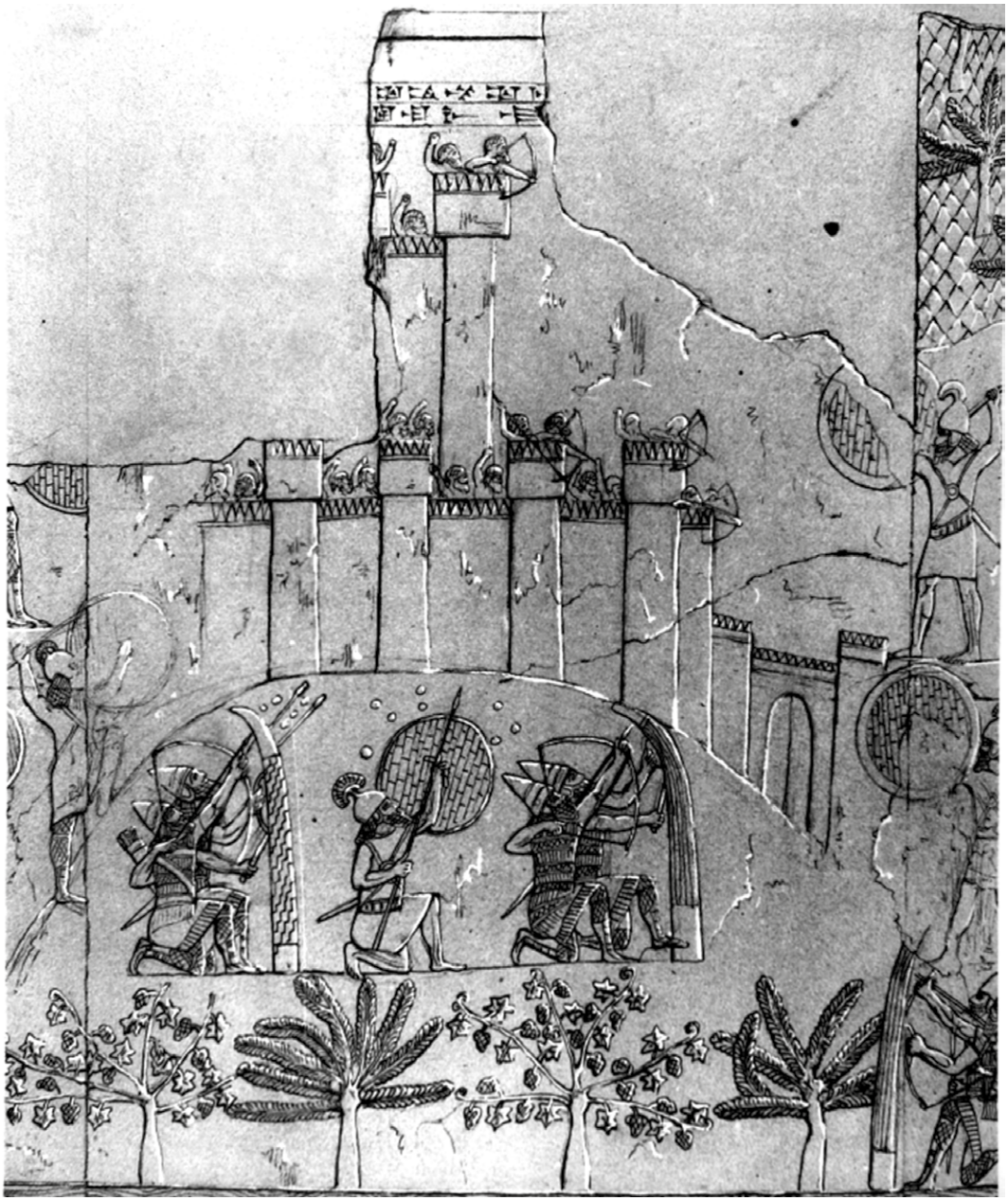

Figure 13. Palace of Sennacherib, Room XIV, enemy city settled on top of a hill (after Barnett and Bleibtreu 1998: pl. 168, n.240).

the presence of settlements, corresponds to an artistic trend that was developed at least from the beginning of the 9th century when the policy of the Assyrian state was mainly dedicated to the construction of the empire. It therefore seemed preferable to show the war activities of the Neo-Assyrian king as a sequence of different military techniques, moments and situations in time and space, interrupted by partial stops in the expanding, conquering march determined by the attacks and sieges of some of the enemy's settlements (Eph'al 2009; De Backer 2013; Nadali 2019c), rather than as the sum of long-distance battles and victories in the open field (Micale 2008: 452; Nadali 2010 and 2016). Moreover, the scenic background of the conquered city, sometimes depicted still under attack or in flames, was adapted not only to inspire horror, but also to give relevance to the narration of the effects of victory – the removal of the entire population, the prisoners of war, the deportees with women and children, the sack, and the spoils, as well as the diplomatic encounters with submissive local elites (Figure 14). The study of the elements attested in the narrative of the royal inscriptions and in the iconographic traditions of the reliefs has already shown that the message conveyed by both media to their respective audiences is strictly coherent and corresponds to the standard ideological

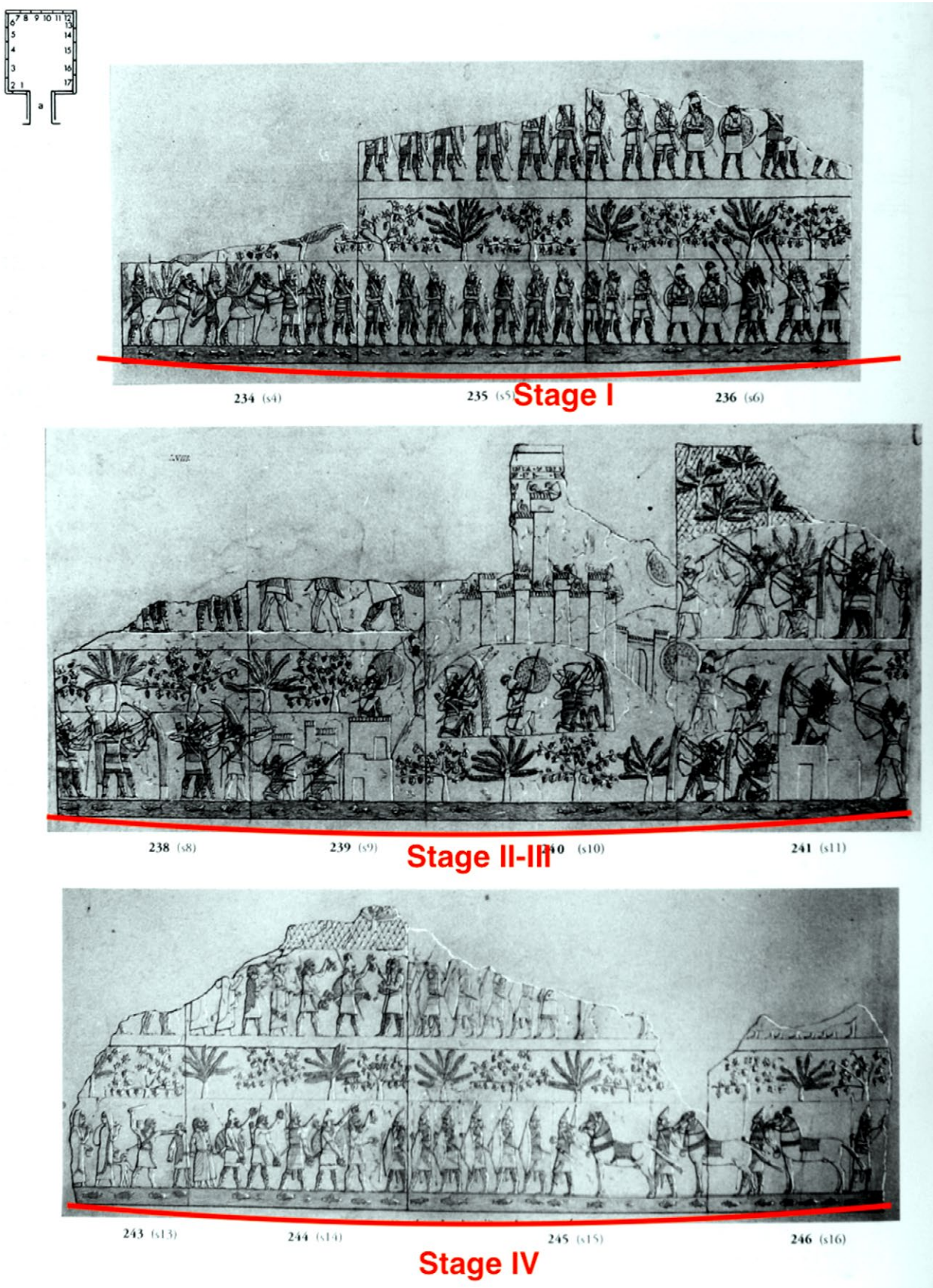

Figure 14. Palace of Sennacherib, Room XIV, analysis of the siege stages (after Battini 2022: fig. 7)

discourse of Assyrian kingship (Winter 1981, 1997; Marcus 1995; Tadmor 1997; Bagg 2016; Nadali 2016, 2019a; Pongratz-Leisten 2017; Matthiae 2018). There is no reason to contradict these conclusions. Under these conditions, the rarity, even the exclusion of the representation of Assyrian cities and capitals from the iconographic production, on the one hand, and the use of specific architectural forms and objects to mark the foreign cities – the cities of the "other", the enemy – on the other hand, may not be random artistic choices, effects of changes in the visual narrative system. The logic that drives this organization in the communication of the royal message needs to be investigated. Beyond or prior to the ideological dialectics of the content of the royal iconography, this rule may have been the result of the evolution of ancient conceptions of Assyrian and foreign identity and the way they were represented. For Assyrian culture, it is possible to start studying it long before the period of the creation of the first reliefs, since royal inscriptions reveal the way in which its kingship used the *système de pensée* to define its authority and power, not only over the enemy's cities, but also over Assyrian society and the Assyrian state – his potential enemy?

The Cities of the Assyrians and the Cities of the Enemies in the Royal Inscriptions

The global iconographic sign – I would say the "ideogram" – visible in Assyrian art and culture to represent the city, every city, attested since the 11th century BCE, is a line corresponding to the layout of a ring of walls, segmented by the presence of towers protecting gates and other structures, such as temples and palaces, inside it. The most common view is frontal, from a distance; there is no perspective, at least until the production of the last periods, but at the same time the rarer representation of two (or even three) levels of buildings could suggest their volumes, inserted in a delimited space (Micale 2011). In the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the presence of the city, the city of Ashur, is instead more ancient, apparent since the period of the foundation of the city-state itself (Veenhof 2017). Official texts produced by the city government, the "assembly", integrated the narrative of the construction and management of the city wall and other urban structures of Ashur, carried out by a local, indigenous leader. He could in this way define the functions of his authority and his legitimacy towards the whole Assyrian society, in a period when no ideology of kingship, nor warship, could be used in this way (Veenhof 2017: 70–73). The importance of the "city" sign, also shown by the iconography of its seal – a representation of the god Ashur facing his mountain, symbolized as a bull (Veenhof 2017: 74, fig. 3.3b), a reference to the name of the temple, "Wild Bull" (Grayson 1987: 20, A.0.33.1, 16) – is documented since the beginning of the Old Assyrian period (20th-18th century BCE). It is associated with the memory of the first builders of the city wall of Ashur, invoked and quoted in the inscriptions of successors working on the same task (Russell 2017: 426–429). Since the leaders of the city assembly were the representatives of the city god, the temple of Ashur, as the center of city life, was the privileged object of their investment. The inscriptions also mention their care for the temples of other gods, as well as for important parts of the city's services, such as wells and canals. However, the permanent importance of the city wall cannot be doubted, also because its construction determines a change in the topographic organization of the city itself, as mentioned in one of the inscriptions of Ilu-Shumma I (Grayson 1987: 17, A.0.32.2, l. 24–29). Names of city gates are used to identify real estate operations of Erishum I, implying that, with the support of the god Ashur, he destroyed houses, possibly to rebuild and raise the city wall built by his own father (Grayson 1987: 22–23, A.0.33.3.2, l. 33–44).

After his conquest, the Amorite king Shamshi-Addu developed an intensive building program in the city (Veenhof 2017: 65–67). While he never recognized Ashur as the capital of the state he controlled (Ziegler 2002: 213–220), Shamshi-Addu I restored temples built by previous city leaders, especially the temple of Ashur, and doubled the traditional cult celebrated there by imposing that of the god Enlil (Grayson 1987: 48–49, A.0.39.1, l. 18–58). Later, when the "usurper" Puzur-Sin succeeded in restoring a (native) Assyrian dynasty to the throne, Shamshi-Addu I's architectural additions were considered abominations. They had destroyed the original landscape and were condemned to be erased and replaced by new foundations – of the city wall as well as of a palace, marked by ritual celebrations (Grayson 1987: 77–78, A.0.40, 1–78). A significant change in the urban layout of Ashur must be attributed to the reign of Puzur-Ashur III (Grayson 1987: 100, A.0.69.1, l.4–10), when the great city wall integrating the "New City" district was constructed, in a period marked by the first territorial expansion of the state beyond the Tigris (Yamada 2017: 113–114). Since then, as far as we can judge from the evidence in the royal inscriptions – at least from a statistical point of view, considering what remains of their written productions – the city walls separating Ashur from its regional environment as well as from the river are established as a symbol of the city, a sign of (royal) involvement in the management of Assyrian society, so that almost every king records his intervention in its reconstruction (Grayson 1987: 101, A.0.70). The society residing there is signified by the city walls, with the quays along the Tigris, and the public spaces associated with the monumental stairs, where the community can be reunited for common worship as well as for the administration of state justice (Grayson 1987: 20–21, A.0.33.1).

The Middle Assyrian Period

At the beginning of the Middle Assyrian Period, after Ashur-uballit I had established his independence from Mittanian authority, the city-state identified itself through the new institutional form of the "Land of Ashur" administered by a "Great King" (Jakob 2017). The Assyrian ideology did not change immediately: the reconstruction of the outer city wall between the "Craftsmen's Gate" and the "Sheep Gate", which delimited the "New City", part of the structure built by former city leaders, is still confirmed by Enlil-narari (Grayson 1987: 118–119, A.0.74.1, l.1–7a). However, his inscriptions also show a remarkable innovation: for the first time in a preserved edition, reports about the royal military policy and achievements are integrated into the text. The narrative of Enlil-narari's (or perhaps his son Adad-narari I's) war against the Babylonian king Kurigalzu now includes a toponym, the name (broken in the text) of a rebel city attacked and conquered by the Assyrian king (Grayson 1987:119, A.0.74.1001, l.2'–8'). Since then, whenever the content of a royal inscription focuses on military activities, toponyms, city and country names, and sometimes the names of their leaders appear in the text as elements of the information to be conveyed. The same tendency can be seen in the inscriptions of Arik-den-ili, where for the first time – but in a fragmentary tablet – his successful campaign to the northeast of Ashur is marked in a new style not only by onomastics, identifying the enemies, but also by the toponyms corresponding to their cities, capital/fortress, and region/country. In this context the different kinds and quantities of the booty brought home from the campaign are specified, a part of which is to be offered to the goddess Ishtar (Grayson 1987: 126–127, A.0.75.8). Arik-den-ili surrounded Mr. Esini in his city of Arnuna, a fortress on the land of Nagimhi, before attacking and destroying its gates. The result was not entirely disastrous for the enemy, for he survived and "took an oath" of submission to Arik-den-ili. The narrative continues with lists of other enemy cities, possibly in the same region, mentioning the massacre of 600 people and a local leader identified by name, a Mr. Remaku, as a political punishment. It is possible to recognize in this ancient text the narrative structure and the historical data that will organize, in the following centuries, the development of a large part of the royal (and imperial) Assyrian historiography. The royal discourse already appears to be modeled on a literary and formal tradition that seeks a more precise localization of spaces and actions, as well as the time of the king's interventions. These forms became characteristic, idiomatic of the generative grammar of royal inscriptions, not shared with other typologies of texts produced by the same palace chancery.

Concerning the building activities in the city of Ashur (Figure 15), Arik-den-ili's son and successor, Adad-narari I, is, as usual, credited with the restoration of the temples of Ishtar and Ashur or the construction of other urban structures. However, in different inscriptions the king is depicted especially during the (re)construction of parts of the city walls, including gates and towers, as well as the wharves along the banks of the Tigris (Grayson 1987: 141–149, A.0.76. 7–14). These inscriptions give topographical indications for the exact location of the described work, mentioning for example city gates or the general orientation of the wall (cf. Grayson 1987: 147, A.0.76.13, l.29–37), and they detail the techniques and materials used to improve the resistance to erosion and the monumental appearance of the structures (cf. Grayson 1987: 141, A.0.76.8, l.24–29). To show the continuity of the royal involvement in these construction projects on the city walls, one of the "standard" introductions to the building inscriptions of Adad-narari I evokes the names of ancient kings and ancestors responsible for their construction, sometimes even mentioning their own founding texts. The preservation of this (written) memory is an asset that should be preserved and respected in the future, just like the structures themselves. All information about Adad-narari I's interventions in the architecture of the city are thus integrated into a precise historical knowledge of the chancery and could be virtually checked and compared with reality.

In one of the introductions to his building inscriptions, Adad-narari I, the "founder of cult centers", is presented primarily as a "great king", a conqueror, the defeater of four peoples who encircled the land of Ashur: Kassites, Qutu, Lullumu, and Shubaru (Grayson 1987: 131–132, A.0.76.1, l. 1–15). In this short list, apart from the better-known case of the Kassites, societies and states are identified by ethnonyms and terms that may be meaningful only in the context of cuneiform (Assyrian) culture itself, but which do not identify specific countries with their borders. Their sequence, while implying a kind of totality, is not geographically oriented, as is the corresponding list of toponyms, mainly cities, cited in the following lines, which does not align them with a coherent orientation. The location of the Euphrates River to the west and the range of the Kashyari Mountains to the north provide a partial geographic framework for the military operations. These data are considered precise and recognized enough to represent political and historical spaces that, after the conquest, would become the new borders of the empire. The construction of the image of this new, expanding *māt Aššur* depends on the competence of the writer/reader of the text, his ability to locate these points and places on a virtual, mental map, oriented also by ideological references (Michalowski 1986; Marcus 1995; Konstantopoulos 2017; Richardson 2017). The

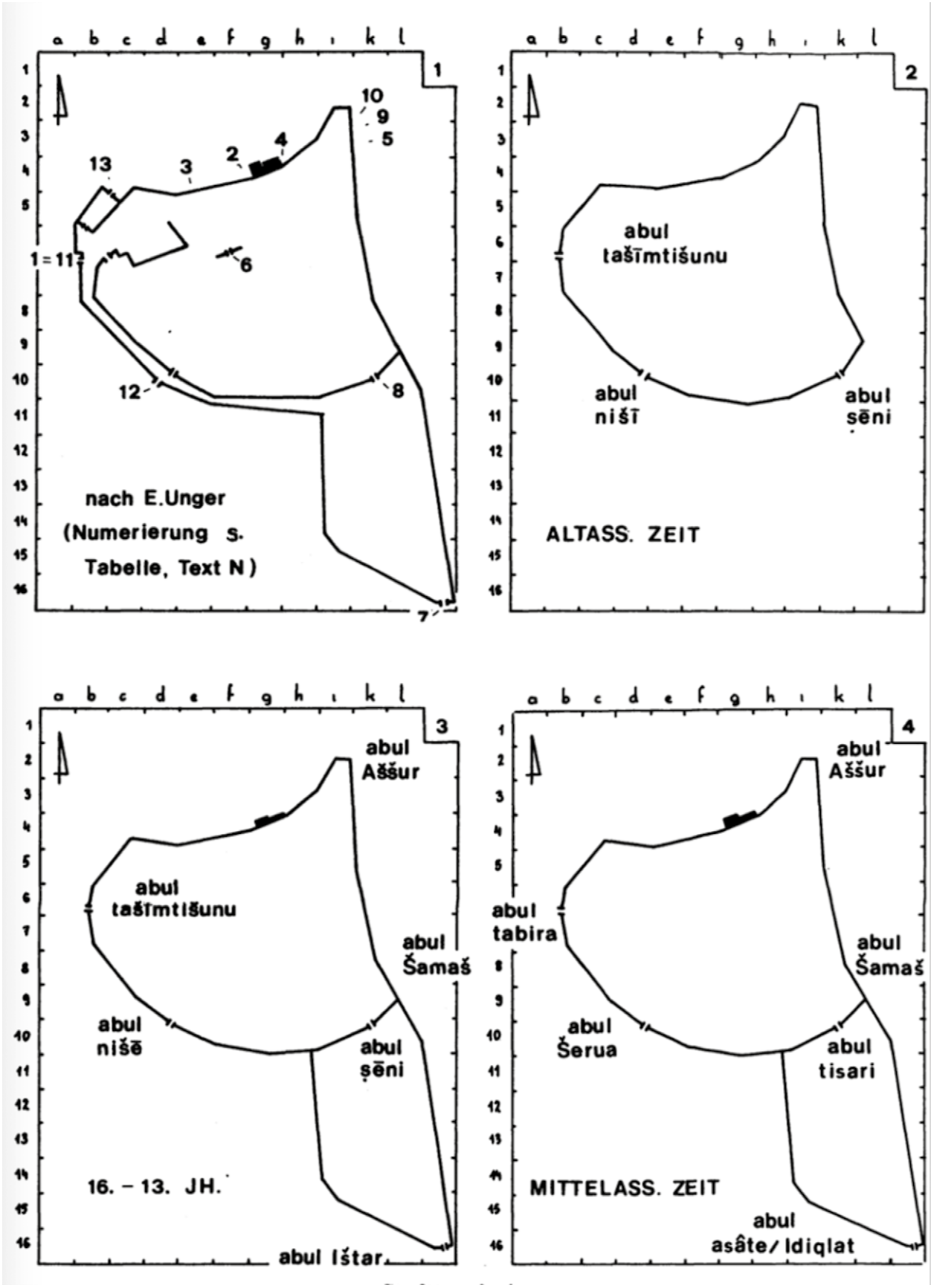

Figure 15. Evolution of the Assur's defense system (after Miglus 1982: fig. p. 278).

same exploitation of learned toponyms and ethnonyms of foreign lands to represent the Neo-Assyrian Empire in its virtual ideological maximum extension is attested in a literary composition known in its more recent edition as the "Sargon Geography" text (Horowitz 1998: 67–97; Liverani 1999-2001), where similar ways of defining the borders of different regions in "mental maps" – as geographical, not political borders – can also be found. A part of the Assyrian elites could have had this kind of knowledge and competence – the king, the military government, a part of the palace and Ashur temple administration, which stored booties and tributes from the conquered countries, perhaps merchants and commercial enterprises (Postgate 2013). In any case, the entire virtual audience of the inscriptions is supposed to share the same general vision of international space – as do the gods – and to be privy to the geographical and topographical details to correctly assess the king's power and the expansion of the Assyrian borders.

In the same way, other ethnonyms and toponyms are associated in their titles with mentions of the king's direct ancestors. In the case of Adad-narari I's father, Arik-den-ili, the citation of the conquest of the land of Nagimhi confirms the information given in his own inscription (Grayson 1987: 132, A.0.76.1, l. 18b–24a). In another standard introduction to the building inscriptions of Adad-narari I, the toponyms cited in the previous text appear in the same order, integrated into a narrative section that recounts specific political events related to his struggles against the kings of Khanigalbat (Grayson 1987: 136, A.0.76.3, l.4b–43a). The city names and geographical references mentioned in the narrative to define the conquered lands obviously have the same function and work in the same way as the evocation of the toponyms associated with the king's titles. The constant mention of the city of Ashur serves as a reminder that it is the central point of the system – from where the king's campaigns begin and end, bringing booty and wealth back to the city and its gods (Grayson 1987: 136–137, A.0.76.3, l. 45b–49a).

Shalmaneser I 's inscriptions focus on his building activities in the city of Ashur. The king rebuilt the temple of Ashur, which had been destroyed by fire (cf. Grayson 1987: 185, A.0.77. 1, l. 112–148), adding two new towers, but also the construction of other temples, palaces, and a part of the city wall with the gates is recorded. Various texts describe the king's building enterprises in other cities to show their full integration into the empire. These royal activities in the city of Ashur are inserted into a long narrative and are connected, or even assimilated in a chronological perspective, with the military campaigns carried out in northern Mesopotamia. In the section of the inscriptions relating to the military events of his reign, the geographical information about the enemy country, already exploited in his father's texts, becomes central. The narrative is characterized by the insertion of toponyms to express the king's progress in the conquest of the bordering lands. A new element appears in the accounts of the campaign to the north, against the land of Urartu: before a list of eight toponyms, those of the conquered lands, their natural environment is now explicitly connoted as a region of mighty mountains, difficult to cross (cf. Grayson 1987: 183, A.0.77.1, l. 26b–41). Since this period, this specific morphology of the enemy's territories became the standard scenography evoked in the royal inscriptions for the Assyrian campaigns in northern Mesopotamia and the Zagros. The mountainous landscape allows a literary description in heroic terms of the Assyrian king's march to the enemy's cities, while the wilderness of the environment does not seem to be transferred to all its inhabitants. At least in the Middle Assyrian period, these "others" are not always portrayed as barbaric, savage peoples. Only in a few cases are their leaders recognized as kings by the Assyrian chancery, but some of these enemies live in cities and have property to be plundered or destroyed. They form, if not yet states, at least "peoples" with their own culture, names, and language, and as such they can make political decisions. Because the "city" had rebelled, not fearing the god Ashur, Shalmaneser I had to conquer and destroy the "sacred" Arinu, which was built on rock – as were the city of Ashur itself and its temples (Grayson 1987: 183, A.0.77.1, l. 47–5).

In the case of the war against the land of Khanigalbat, the enemy is described in a more complex way. Its leader is powerful and menacing because he is a king who has found dangerous allies, identified by general ethnic names familiar to the Assyrian chancery, such as "Hittites" or "Ahlamu" – possibly distinguishing between Syrian urbanized societies and semi-nomadic ones. These terms represented the horizon of political forces in northern Mesopotamia that resisted Assyrian pressure, but they do not correspond to any country or government in the region. The population of Khanigalbat has neither a proper ethnonym nor a presence in the narrative, but the toponym itself, with its historical meaning (Masetti-Rouault 2022), and the onomastics of its king, recall the ancient Assyrian conflict against the Mittani federation. Their evocation is enough to explain the attack plan of the Assyrian army. However, cities did exist: Shalmaneser I destroyed nine of his fortified cult centers, his capital, and 180 of his cities (Grayson 1987: 184, A.0.77.1, l.75b–78a). None of these settlements are identified, no location of the battles is given, even though the text, summing up the results of the campaign at the end of the section, mentions the limits of the area under the king's control. It's sketched by virtual lines connecting some important cities, including a reference to both the Kashyari

Mountains and the Euphrates, all already quoted in the inscriptions of Adad-narari I (Grayson 1987: 183–184, A.0.77.1, l. 47–87). In the texts of Shalmaneser I, some toponyms are mentioned, but no effort is made to specify the location of the cities beyond a reference to the common mountain environment. In the same way, a general identification of the communities (of citizens) defeated by the Assyrian king can be related to the region and the state to which they belonged. However, the insertion of literary ethnonyms such as "Hittites" or "Guteans," referring to traditional enemies or "barbarians" to emphasize their connection with the Assyrians, doubles and replaces geographical references or political names in the narrative, leaving the mapping of the king's conquest unclear and uncertain. Possibly these terms would not have been recognized as self-referential by the defeated populations themselves: not recorded during the campaign itself, they were added by the chancellery to create this kind of literary effect.

Tukulti-Ninurta I, himself "King of the Universe", founder of Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta, with a palace, a temple for Ashur, a canal, and a city wall (Grayson 1987: 270–271, A.0.78.22, l. 39–54) invested much of his energy in the construction of the city of Ashur too. He started the construction of a new palace, temples for different gods, but also the city wall with a new, deep moat dug into the rock (Grayson 1987: 267, A.0.78.19, l. 3–7) – understandably, to compensate for the programmed change in the location of the capital. The wall of the new city is designed to "inspire reverence" for his lordship. However, in his titles at the beginning of the inscriptions, the focus of his policy is no longer on building activities, but rather on his efforts to satisfy the expectations of the Assyrian gods, thanks to the results of his wars and conquests, in a fully adopted imperial ideology. The names of the peoples and lands targeted by the king's strategy of territorial expansion thus became the main content of the information conveyed in his inscriptions, now formulated in a more structured and elaborate style than that found in the texts of his ancestors. Since the gods don't need to know geography to perceive the royal achievements, in the narrative sections of Tukulti-Ninurta I's inscriptions dealing with his military activities, toponyms referring to cities are practically never used, with few exceptions. When it is necessary in the narrative to mention the conquest of one or more specific urban settlements, their toponyms are systematically replaced by terms connoting their different functions, such as "cult centers," "capitals," and "fortified centers" (cf. Ikeda 1979), as recognized by the Assyrians, without providing any information about their cultural or architectural character.

It is the mention of land/regional toponyms, organized in a fixed sequence that reconstructs a geographical and chronological sequence of episodes and situations, that functions as the more usual way of detailing the military and political events themselves, without further description or digression (cf. Grayson 1987: 234–237, A.0.78.1, l. ii 14–iv 36). Some of these toponyms appear to be geographical names of territory: "the land of Mehru, the land of Katmuhu, the land of Nairi" and an equivalent "the whole of Mount Kashyari". Others are instead identified by association with an ethnonym, "the land (of the) Uqumenu", such as "the land (of the) Qutu", "the Shubaru", "the Lullumu", and "the Paphu". According to a rule already accepted by the royal chancery, these traditional or learned names of (foreign) peoples were preferred to toponyms referring to a country as a political institution, to create the impression that nothing similar existed in the regions touched by the king's advance. In general, these terms evoked for the Assyrians, in a shared mental vision, standard mountainous, rocky landscapes with a vague geographical precision. In the narrative, the different types of spatial information are often mixed, especially when they are integrated into the royal titles. In this context, the conquered lands to be added to the surface of the Assyrian homeland can be visualized and recognized not only through the mention of ethnonyms, but also using "historical" and literary Mesopotamian toponyms – such as, after Karduniash, "Sumer and Akkad" (cf. Grayson 1987: 244, A.0..78.5, l. 4b–5a), as well as "Sippar and Babylon, Tilmun and Meluhha" (cf. Grayson 1987: 275, A.0.78.24, l. 14–15), and again through generic geographical references - for example, "(king of the) Upper and Lower Seas, of the extensive mountains and plains." While no location is given for the decisive field battle against Kashtiliashu IV, the inscription written after Tukulti Ninurta's victory over Babylon quotes a list of previously unknown names of lands to show their (virtual) incorporation into the empire after the end of Babylonian control (Grayson 1987:272–272, A.0.78.23, l. 56–82). In some rare cases, the toponym of the land is accompanied by the mention of a local leader or king, identified by his (foreign) name. His role in the narrative begins to be considered more carefully: if he can be captured, killed, or brought to Ashur, the narrative freely admits that he can also manage to escape with his court and his army, apparently without limiting the full success of the Assyrian army (cf. Grayson 1987: 236, A.0.78.1, iii, l. 6–11a). This is the first appearance of the theme of "the enemy fleeing his city" and seeking refuge in the mountains, outside the civilized world.

After the collapse, first efforts to reconstruct the empire

The change in the structure of the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, which now present the royal campaigns in an annalistic form, increases the importance and precision of both the toponymy of the lands and the onomastics of their leaders and kings. The names of regions, lands and cities are systematically mentioned

in the narrative to explain a historical or political event related to the progress of the royal campaigns, thus also in a chronological order. In the same vein, much more attention is paid to geographical details – for example, the systematic addition of oronyms or hydronyms to identify a region, a city, or the layout of a path followed by the king in his march (cf. Grayson 1991: 18, A.0.87.1, iii, l. 41b–47a), to show the presumed complete knowledge and control of the landscapes crossed by the Assyrian army. These toponyms also appear as elements of (sometimes long) lists of foreign terms integrated into the narrative to provide a kind of quantitative assessment of the king's conquests and prowess, as well as of the chancery's (geographical) knowledge of previously unknown areas (cf. Grayson 1987: 21, A.0.87.1, iv l. 52b–67). Although they obviously represent only a selection of the Assyrian king's real itineraries and the settlements touched by the campaign, these data occupy a central position in Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions, serving as hard evidence of the realism of the campaign narrative. This literary choice may have been an answer to a new, growing need of the chancery to create a situation for the virtual audience of the inscriptions in which it was possible to follow the king's progress in his wars almost step by step and to connect it with the "real" environment, natural and political, that he faced. The interest in and knowledge of foreign toponyms can also correspond to the protocols of the Assyrian administration used to manage the conquered lands on their way to becoming imperial provinces, registering the arrival of tribute and taxes in Ashur, of which the *ginā'ū* lists are an example (Postgate 2013: 89–107). As usual, the natural environment crossed by each campaign – the mountains, but now also the steppes and the sea – represents a challenge for the king in the narrative and highlights his heroic attitudes, which are also perceptible in the description of his hunting experiences, added to the narrative. To organize this type of information coherently, the chancery specialists in charge of the inscriptions had at their disposal not only the reports and lists written during the campaigns, but also the collection of administrative and bureaucratic texts containing these data, which allowed them to modify the narrative and the toponymy itself, cutting or enriching the versions produced for each campaign with their variants.

But it's also noteworthy that in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, the cities of the enemy begin to occupy a proper, distinct place in the narrative. While following the tradition, the names of peoples and lands are still preferentially cited – the Assyrian king fights against their respective armies in their own territory –, toponyms referring to cities are finally also mentioned, to emphasize a particular aspect of Assyrian warfare and to establish a new pattern in the narrative. The situation of attacking and besieging an enemy city (Eph'al 2009; De Backer 2013; Nadali 2019c) starts to be sometimes evoked during the campaigns, but in an allusive manner. Tiglath-pileser I attacks a fortified city, Shereshshu, "on the other side of the Tigris " because people from the land of Katmuhu have taken refuge there, to escape the Assyrian invasion. He overcomes the natural obstacles protecting this city, the river, the mighty mountains, and conquers it, destroying their army (Grayson 1991: 14–15, A.0.87.1, ii, l. 1b–14). The image of people (and kings) fleeing from the cities to the high mountains, barricading themselves in what they believe to be inaccessible fortresses, appears whenever possible in royal inscriptions of the Neo–Assyrian period, with some narrative variations. This sequence should not be seen as a criticism of the Assyrian army's siege tactics or as a temporary failure of the attack. It works primarily as a situation adapted to highlight the panic generated in the enemy city by the advance of the campaign itself (Richardson 2017), as well as the equally foolish presumption of the ruler or the people to be able to resist the Assyrian conquest. Later, the vague of terror in the inscriptions is explained as an effect of the royal *melammu,* the epiphanic manifestation of the Assyrian kings' power over the enemies, making them aware of their weakness before the conqueror. In this perspective, the flight, the abandonment of the city to find shelter in another, apparently better fortified place in the mountains, is already an admission of Assyrian superiority, and the decision to flee is only a proof of folly (Fales 1982). Through this specific sequence, however, the narrative finally acknowledges the agency of the enemy, who tries to resist and fight, sometimes even organizing guilty alliances with neighbors, without any hope of success (Zawadski 2014). It is only a matter of time: the end of the story does not change, and the final chase of the enemy, as he flees to the mountains for shelter, gives the Assyrian king another opportunity to show his nature of an expert hunter and master of the hostile environment.

Along with the toponyms of cities, the narrative of Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions also includes more frequent examples of onomastics – even long lists of foreign names – identifying the rulers of the attacked and conquered lands, now usually recognized as kings. While their armies are massacred, kings are often taken prisoner and brought to Ashur after their palaces and cities are destroyed and ransacked, or, if they have wisely submitted to the Assyrian king, they are even allowed to rule their lands (cf. Grayson 1991: 21–22 (A.0.87.1), iv, l. 71a–101. v, l. 1–21). In these contexts, the toponymy of the "royal" cities, the capitals of the enemy, is almost never mentioned. This situation could be explained by the fact that the name of the enemy city, especially when it is the residence of its king, corresponds in the inscriptions to the name of the "land", the country itself (cf. Grayson 1991: 19, A.0.87.1, iii, 95b– 101). In contrast, the urban settlement is always identified by a toponym when it means and represents

the local society, the inhabitants. In the narrative of the conquest, the walls of their city gradually become an important place where the Assyrian army meets the resistance of the rebellious cities. In the course of time, in the larger space reserved in the reliefs of the Assyrian palaces for the representation of the enemy cities, the resistance of the fighters on the walls is emphasized in comparison with the competence of the specialists of the Assyrian army in the art of siege. In the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, to the usual sequence of syntagms marking the sacking and destruction of cities, some special remarks are sometimes added describing their defensive systems, and a specific Assyrian king's order is quoted not to rebuild them, nor to occupy the site again, forever (Grayson 1991: 24, A.0.87.1, v, l. 99–100 vi, l. 1–19a). In another case, when the city surrenders after a siege, the local king is forced to destroy the triple ring of walls around his capital himself (Grayson 1991: 25–26, A.0.87.1, vi, l. 22–30).

In the version of the Annals that relates Tiglath-pileser I's campaigns to the south and to Karduniash (Frahm 2017b), which uses the names of cities, rivers, and mountains to mark the various stages of the king's approach to Babylon, toponymy is cited with new precision, evoking regions culturally closer to Ashur (cf. Grayson 1991: 43–44, A.0.87.4, l. 37–51). The topography of some cities and fortresses is described in detail, e.g. a foundation on an island in the Euphrates. The list, which corresponds to the order of the conquests, in this case takes the form of a travelogue. The model of the "itinerary", marking the main stations where travelers or caravans stopped on their way from the two main points, has been attested since the late third millennium (Edzard 1977; Cancik-Kirschbaum 2023; Ziegler, Otto, and Fink 2023). Created to document and organize diplomatic and commercial travels for interregional and international exchange, the same textual structure is exploited not only in literary texts, but later also in royal inscriptions, especially during the 9th century BCE, revealing a new interest in linking the king's march to known and meaningful travel systems. While the Ahlamu/Aramean people and their governments were certainly close neighbors, the reports of the campaigns in northern Mesopotamia and the west (Bagg 2017) against them, which confirm their connotation as "nomads", i.e. without a precise association with lands and cities, do not require a specific toponymy and onomastics in Tiglath-pileser I's inscriptions beyond generic references to the banks of the Euphrates and/or the Bishri Mountains in Syria (cf. Grayson 1991: 34, A.0.87.2, l. 28–29). Even if the settlements associated with the Aramaeans are eventually conquered and scattered, no heroic chases in the mountains are mentioned, since the confrontation with the "Aramaeans" in this period is represented as a constant and rapid pursuit. The chase takes place within a virtual region delimited by lines connecting a mountainous area with cities belonging to different "lands" and peoples (Grayson 1991: 37–38, A.0.87.3, l. 29–35). This is another indication that the insertion of toponyms evoking the enemy cities into the narrative discourse of the inscriptions cannot yet be considered as a support for the creation of a virtual (mental) map of the regions now subjected to Assyrian domination. These names did not have a specific geographical meaning for the audience and were of no use in reconstructing borders, which were always in motion anyway. If the audience is expected to have a greater knowledge or interest in the geography of the empire, the pertinent information offered by the narrative is still rather elusive. It follows the rule never to create an opposition or contrast between the Assyrians and the enemies based on the difference of their cultures – except in the case of the Ahlamu/Aramaeans, who have no cities, or, later, of peoples living in exotic natural environments (Zaccagnini 1982). In fact, only the political choices made by the "cities" in the face of the policies of the "King of the Universe" determine their survival or destruction.

Thanks to the experiments carried out since the Middle Assyrian period, already in the productions of the chancery of Tiglath-pileser I, most of the elements, subjects and situations treated in the narration are related to foreign, non-Assyrian cities. They will later constitute the objects and the forms exploited by the royal iconography (Figure 16) carrying the same ideological message, attested on stelae, obelisks, and stone reliefs (Battini 2016). The city, its walls, its people, and its king are finally there, visible from afar, as they are in the texts. The presence of fighting men and desperate women, still present on the city walls attacked by the Assyrian army – or outside them, massacred or deported to become slaves –, their behavior, their final fate are highlighted and dramatically represented in the first reliefs decorating the Neo-Assyrian palaces (Marcus 1995; Bagg 2016; Nadali 2016). Beyond the citation of ethnonyms and the toponymy of the conquered lands, the enemies and their kings are gradually granted a more definite participation in the narrative of the inscriptions. The citation of architectural elements of their cities, such as the city walls, which begin to be described and partially analyzed, reveals a new interest in them (Grayson 1991: 24–25, A.0.87.1, vi, l. 11–14a. l. 27–28). The attractiveness attributed to the cities and the responsibility of their kings in the construction of the city walls recalls and corresponds to the commitment of the Assyrian king to the construction and restoration of the city layout of Ashur – its border with the rest of the world. On the other hand, the agency of the enemy peoples in the wars against Assyria finds no parallel in the function attributed to the Assyrian society and army in the narrative of political and military events – where they are rarely perceptible, hidden by the presence of the king.

Figure 16. Stone pedestal of Tukulti-Ninurta I (after Battini 2016, fig. 4.2a and b)

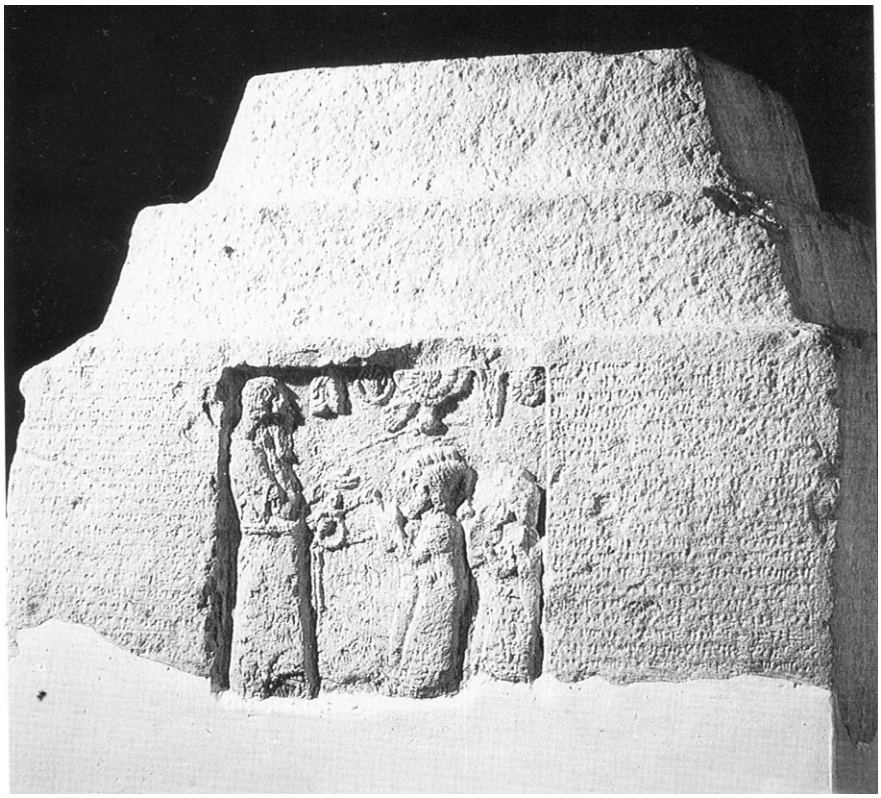

Figure 17. The Broken Obelisk (after Battini 2016: fig. 4.5)

Royal inscriptions and iconography: the "Broken Obelisk" and the White Obelisk

Considering this development in the narrative structures of royal inscriptions, it's easier to understand how and why, after the reign of Tiglath-pileser I, are attested the first productions of monuments marked by a new iconographic language, designed to communicate the same kind of ideological message to a larger audience as the inscriptions (Liverani 2014; Bagg 2016). The "Broken Obelisk" (Figure 17) found at Niniveh and attributed to the chancery and the artistic workshop of Ashur-bel-kala (Grayson 1991: 99–106, A.0. 89.7), an almost immediate successor to Tiglath-pileser I, confirms this trend through the iconography of the monument, which is important because it reveals the function of the representation of the enemy in defining the image of the Assyrian king. Although not new in its composition – and traditionally exploited in ancient Mesopotamian art traditions, especially in the Assyrian one – the iconography inserted between the columns of the cuneiform text represents a team of four subdued enemies controlled by the king through a leash held in his hand (Ornan 2007). The scene occupies the higher part of the monument, the only one preserved, but it could have been associated with other reliefs, now lost. The imponent image of the king, facing right, acts as a relay connecting the enemies with a series of divine symbols placed high around his head. With his other hand open upward, the king receives the bow offered by a hand protruding from the flying, celestial symbol of Ashur. The submission of the enemies is the result and manifestation of the god's support, further proving the king's legitimacy. If the image of the enemy as a corpse, killed in battle, or as a prisoner and slave of the Assyrian king became the standard evidence of his power, the presence and action of the god gradually disappears in the same contexts once the meaning of the image of the enemy body is established. In the "Broken Obelisk", divided into two groups, the enemies, not specifically identified, could represent the Arameans, the most frequently cited target of Ashur-bel-kala's campaigns in the inscription of the stele (Grayson 1991: 101–103, A.0. 89.7, iii, l.1–3a; iii, l.8b–10a; iii, l.13b–32). Their images can be interpreted as portraits of each of the foreign leaders he presented in the stela inscription, which celebrates the construction of some of the Ashur's urban infrastructures, such as temples, a canal, and the city wall with gates and a moat (Grayson 1991: 104–105, A.0.89.7, v, l. 1–27a). It's noteworthy that in this text, compared to their treatment in the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I, Aramaeans are now systematically identified by their association with toponyms of urban settlements, sometimes specifying the name of their "land" or some other geographic element that helps to locate it.

It is in the iconography of the "White Obelisk " (Figure 18 a-b), dated to the period after the reign of Ashur-bel-kala, that the first representations of the city, already defined by the layout of its walls and towers, occupy a specific, visible place in the narrative. The forms in this series of reliefs have possibly been evaluated as simpler, more primitive, thus more ancient, when compared to the same images / symbols found in the bronze bands applied over the Balawat gates dated to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, and even more to the cycles of reliefs on the walls of the royal palace at Calah. For this reason, a date for the monument has been advanced during Ashurnasirpal I's reign, about a century earlier. This chronology allows a longer period for the creation and development of a new artistic school and workshop which, since the beginning of the 9th century, could fully assume the task of communicating the ideological imperial message elaborated by the chancery of Ashurnasirpal II. The debate among art historians and archaeologists is still open, as we have noted, but perhaps there is no need to assume such a slow development of these ideas and artistic competence in the royal workshops, if the reasons for the change are to be found in a new political situation with its exigencies, and on the other hand, if the art of reliefs was inspired and oriented by the narrative structures already established by the tradition of the royal inscriptions. Beyond the fact that it is difficult to measure the degree of their visibility, readability for the public, the White Obelisk, as well as the bronze bands of the Balawat Gates, show outside the palace the same discourse shouted in the reliefs decorating the royal halls, at least its core, the most important part, concerning the nature and power of the king. As in the inscriptions, the representation of the enemy is central to this function, but in the White Obelisk, as in all the artistic creations of Ashurnasirpal II's period, the symbol of the city, where the enemy exists and resists, shows eventually all its values, and finds its place in the narrative sequences.

Figure 18a. White Obelisk, BM 118807 (after Pittman 1996: figs. 4-5).

The Neo-Assyrian Period – preparing its beginning

The inscriptions, often annals, of later kings, whose reigns extend until the end of the tenth century BCE, preserved all the themes and forms of expression of the perception/reception of the conquests of the Assyrian kings, exploiting toponymy as well as geographical, environmental information. Since the beginning of the Iron II period, new political and ideological themes must have been developed by the royal chanceries to prepare and explain the policy of the military expansion of the emerging Neo-Assyrian Empire, reflected in the chancery productions, as well as in the artistic and architectural creations, of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (Matthiae 1996a: 37–74). However, there aren't any major innovations in the composition of royal inscriptions: the narrative structures inherited from the Middle Assyrian period up to the reign of Tiglath-pileser I still functioned well, intensively exploiting all their communicative possibilities. No iconographic representations of the same narratives and the same ideological message are known until the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, but at least since the reign of his father Tukulti-Ninurta II the image of the king is represented in a new way – together with his army and chariots and in the presence of the god Ashur, who, drawing a bow, fights with him from the sky (cf. Figure 19). This scene appears in glazed tiles that once decorated the walls or facades of his palace, found at Ashur (cf. Andrae 1925: 25, pls. 7–8; Pritchard 1974: 180, fig. 536; Matthiae 1996a: fig. 1.3). Now in fragmentary condition, this representation is identified and dated by lines of

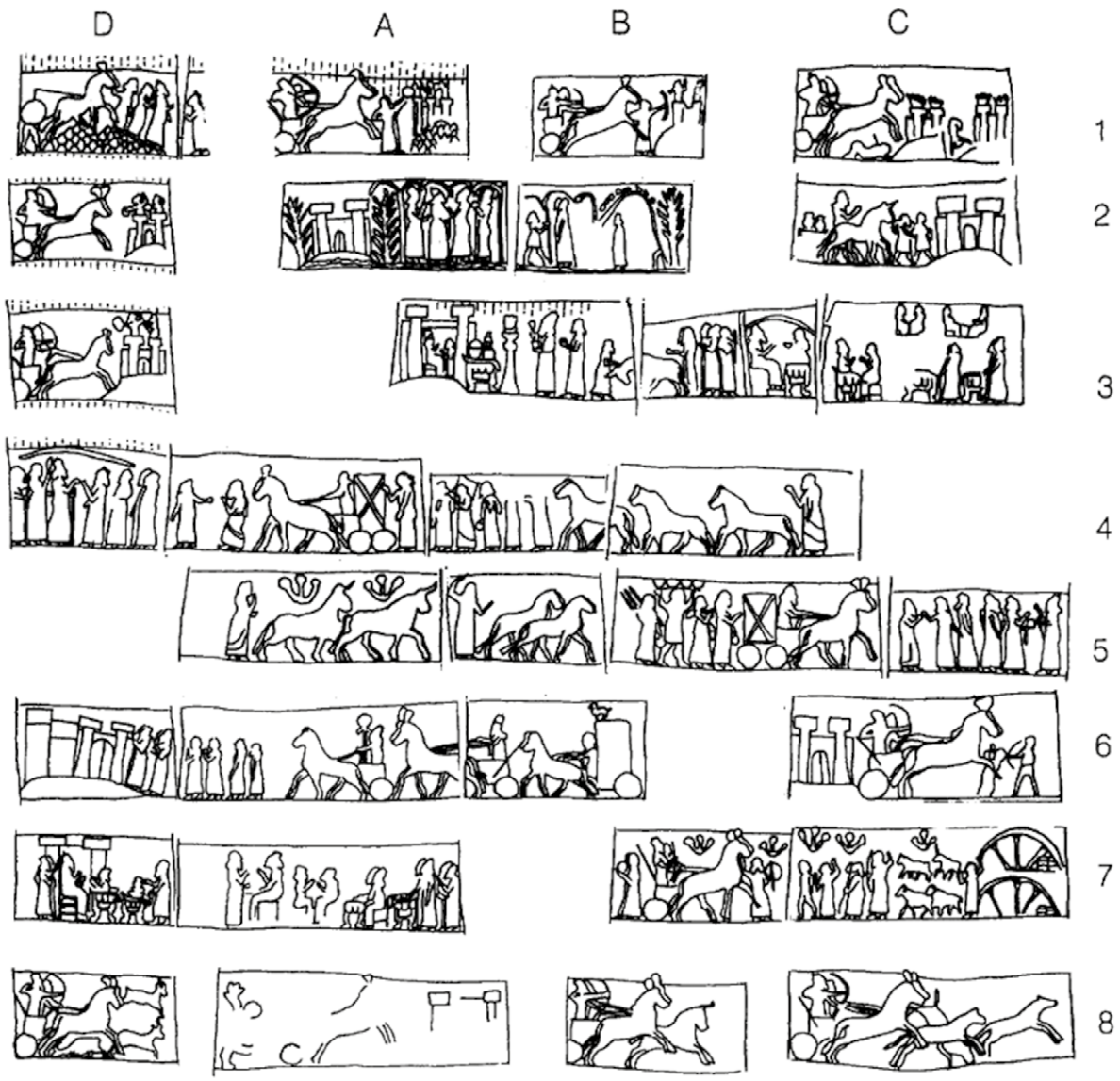

Figure 18b. White Obelisk, reconstruction of its narrative scenes (after Pittman 1996: fig 12).

royal inscriptions (Grayson 1991: 184–185, A.0.100.15). As mentioned above, in another fragmentary tile from his palace at Niniveh, Ashurnasirpal II is shown crowned by a model of a city – the layout of city walls with towers, a virtual reference to his capital, Ashur or Calah, but also reminiscent of the sculpted city symbols in the White Obelisk (Matthiae 1996a: fig. 1.2). In the inscriptions of this intermediate period, information about royal building activities in the city of Ashur or in other Assyrian settlements is less documented, but this situation may depend on the relative scarcity of sources.

In the context of Adad-nirari II's texts, his royal titles integrate, as a synthesis of his conquests, a list of traditional toponyms of lands and some cities, combined with a few new hydronyms – the Zab River and the Turan/Diyala in the lower Transtigridian region–quoted without any geographical order (Grayson 1991: 148–149, A.0.99.2, l. 23–35). On the other hand, the annalistic structure of the inscriptions is characterized by the narration of campaigns directed at a specific region, even repeated if necessary. The (virtual) conquest of the northwestern part of the Jazireh, the ancient land of Khanigalbat, is carried out through military campaigns against different kings, now each one identified by his name, his (tribal/cultural) origin and his (capital) city, often condemned as "rebels" against the Assyrian order (cf. Grayson 1991: 149–150, A.0.99.2, l. 39–48). The battles and victories are systematically listed using mainly urban toponyms, and in the description of the campaigns, the narration lists events or information

Figure 19. Glazed bricks from Assur (after Gries and Fügert 2019: fig. 5)

about the conquered cities, mentioning their final fate as well as their names: a linguistic equivalence between city toponyms, Akkadian /Aramaic, is once offered (Grayson 1991: 150 (A.0.99.2), l. 52–54). Their destruction is not banalized: after the submission, the king enters some of the cities, and makes them a military base, a potential colony, for his army. Even sieges – the military action carried out around the walls of a city before attacking it – are finally mentioned. The inscription insists on the fact that the tactic of building entrenchments around the walls is being experimented for the first time (Grayson 1991:150 (A.0.99.2), l. 54b–55a). The effect of isolating the settlement from its surroundings, cutting off any possibility of getting food and help from outside, is always understated, as the siege is mentioned only as a strategy, the preliminary military phase of the attack. The evocation of the siege in the texts as a battle scene is parallel and corresponds to its iconographic representation in palace reliefs since the 9th century BCE. Only later, in the Assyrian treaties and oaths of allegiance imposed on vassals in the 7th century, the motif of the total collapse of a society, the population of the enemy city, determined by hunger and famine is used as a deterrent, as a curse, if the oath is broken. Even in this context, the hunger and related horrors, represented in the text by the occurrence of anthropophagy among members of the same family, seem to be the effect not so much of the siege of the city imposed by the Assyrian expedition, but of the lack of rain, cut off by the will of the angry storm god (cf. Parpola and Watanabe 1988: xli–xlii, 11, iv, 8–16: Treaty of Ashur-narari V).

The first narrative of the siege of a city by the Assyrian army, located in northern Mesopotamia, in the "land of Khanigalbat," creates a scene in the texts that gives room for more detailed and ideologically oriented accounts of the enemy's actions and agency. In an inscription by Adad-narari II, the resistance of an (Aramaean) king who, as an alternative to fleeing to the mountains, barricades himself – with his people – in his city, is explicitly qualified as a "revolt", expressed as a refusal to pay tribute: he "trusts" his own forces, the Aramaeans, and the fortifications of his capital (Grayson 1991: 150, A.0.99.2, l. 49–51a). This revolt no longer has anything to do with a refusal to reintegrate the Middle Assyrian Empire. Rather, it is a political resistance to accept the obvious, natural superiority of the Assyrian army and the universal authority of the Assyrian king. For this reason, the Assyrian army, ready to fight, must now specialize in siege techniques, such as the use of siege engines and the construction of redoubts around the city wall, operations whose sequences are detailed in the iconography of later palace stone reliefs (Eph'al 2009; De Backer 2013; Nadali 2019b). To manage this complex and lengthy work, which may have been perceived as less "heroic" and not specifically "royal" than a battle in the mountains, the Assyrian king assigns the responsibility for the task to one of his most senior officers (Grayson 1991: 151, A.0.99.2, l. 63–64a). In this first narrative, the enemy king is shown reacting, organizing the defense, and preparing for the attack by building new structures. He digs a moat around the city wall, so deep into the rock that it reaches the water level - recalling the same

prowess of the Assyrian kings in building the city wall of Ashur (Grayson 1991: 151, A.0.99.2, l. 64b–66a). Again, all this activity is in vain: even protected by the new constructions, the citizen-soldiers, frightened, cry out "like children" before the Assyrian army (Grayson 1991: 151, A.0.99.2, l. 67a). Instead of the usual plunder and destruction, the narrative of the conquest of a besieged city here has a different ending. At least for once, it is continued by an original description of a ceremony: the Assyrian king takes the throne and celebrates sacrifices in the city. Political declarations are reported *verbatim*, with the local king possibly acknowledging the defeat before his own court, to be brought later to Nineveh. As a result, all settlements in the region are considered conquered: the locals who had fled to the mountains came down and submitted (Grayson 1991: 151, A.0.99.2, l. 73–79). Used also in the iconography of the White Obelisk, this narrative, which cuts the Assyrian king's military activity in different moments and stages and emphasizes the siege experience, is one of the oldest models that later, in the iconography of palace reliefs, supported the creation and development of more scenes, including, in their background, the representation of the layout of the (enemy) city on the way to become Assyrian. Some cities are still burning, during and after the battle, the corpses of the enemies decorate the urban landscape, but outside others the Assyrian king and the army are represented also acting without apparent violence in the presence of the enemies, now simple objects reflecting their power: subdued, reunited in lines visible outside their city wall – finally a peaceful place again – they prepare to be deported. The campaigns downstream along the Khabur and the (Syrian) Lower Middle Euphrates valleys are detailed in a different way, possibly signaling to the Assyrian audience a different status of these regions and a better knowledge of their road system. The narrative uses the structure of a travelogue. According to the model already attested in the annals of Tiglath-pileser I, the itinerary, when introduced into the narrative, shows a fluctuation of the subject of the verbs - the king - from the 1st to the 3rd person. "I" to the 3rd, "He", a scribal "mistake" that reveals the consultation of written military reports. The list of toponyms of the mentioned cities corresponds to the segments of the march that the army covers in one day, spending each night in or near another settlement. This attitude gives the impression that all the regions and cities mentioned in the list are under control, as if they may already belong to the Assyrian system. Cities and people do not need to be besieged and conquered; no local king's name is ever mentioned in this itinerary. The cities, identified by their toponyms – some attested since the third millennium –, offer Adad-narari II not only hospitality in their territory to set up his camp, but also their tribute; occasionally, if necessary, a recalcitrant local leader can be replaced by a more hospitable one. The annalistic texts of his son Tukulti-Ninurta II follow the same narrative structure to report on "diplomatic" campaigns in the same regions, although the itinerary he followed was in the opposite direction, this time marching upstream along the banks of the Euphrates – passing first through the Wadi Tharthar basin, from the Babylonian regions of Dur-Kurigalzu and Sippar up to Anat, then into the land of Laqê – then marching along the Khabur and Balikh valleys, before returning east to Ashur.

However, if we compare Tukulti-Ninurta II's campaign along the rivers with that of his father, we see that his travelogue was enlarged and adapted to integrate more information to give a vivid image of the landscape crossed by the army. Foreign cities are not an object of interest and are not described: the natural environment, again - but not only the mountains - is more useful to qualify the progress of the campaign. Presented as parts of the virtual Assyrian world, some regions are still exotic: the descriptions of the areas crossed are original and detailed, creating long digressions in the sequence of toponyms. An example is the description of the desert atmosphere associated with the Wadi Tharthar region: good for the king to hunt wild animals, the scarcity and abandonment of its wells require special work to draw water (Grayson 1991: 173, A.0.100.5, l. 41–51). After having crossed Babylonian regions and cities without clashes or battles, only after arriving in the (Syrian) Lower Middle Euphrates valley, the itinerary begins to mention the Assyrian king's encounters with other peoples. As potential enemies, they turn out to be already (almost) subdued. The "governor" of Anat presents the tribute of his country; in the same way, from Hindanu upstream, in the land of Laqê and in the Khabur valley, almost all the stops of the Assyrian army before the cities on the banks of the river are marked by the reception of the expected rich tribute. It is listed with great precision in its quantities and different qualities, explicitly quoting administrative documents. If it is possible to discern uncertainty in the definition of the relationship of the Assyrian king to each city, its representatives are now also identified by name, as in a bureaucratic receipt, but none of them is recognized as a local "king". The formal submission that each of them established with the Assyrian king renders useless the evocation of the behavior of the local population in the presence of the enemy: there is no mention of city walls, sieges, or attacks in this itinerary. As we have noted, only the narratives of the campaigns to the north and east, especially to the Nairi and Zagros lands, return to the older, traditional forms. The march to the targeted cities is again described using oronyms, and the mountain passes crossed - some of them, admittedly, unknown to the Assyrians, neither to the ancestral kings nor to the merchants (Grayson 1991: 172 (A.0.100.5), l. 30–34a). Almost no onomastics is attached to the names of the country, and only for the campaigns against Nairi the toponymy of some cities is mentioned. The destruction

of large numbers of unspecified settlements in the Zagros region allows the narrative to reuse the topos of the flight of panicked people into the mountains. The king pursues them, himself on foot, since no chariot, no horse, can withstand the harshness of the slopes (Grayson 1991: 173–174, A.0.100.5, l. 34b–40).

Narrative and iconography of the cities, since Ashurnasirpal II's reign

These were the materials, the structures, and the forms of narration in the royal inscriptions that were available and at the disposal of Ashurnasirpal II's chancery to represent the relationship between the king and the city at a time when the political perspective of Assyrian imperialism had to be redefined. The symbolic functions of the city, both the Assyrian capital(s) and those of the others, the enemies, were as important and useful in this dialectic as the evocation of nature - exotic and dangerous animals and natural landscapes. If the relationship between the image of the king and the sign/ideogram of the city had already emerged in all its complexity at the beginning of the Iron II period, the connection of the city with its own environment was still emphasized in the narrative almost exclusively by mentioning its location above or between (mighty) mountains, with a few exceptions. Peoples other than the Assyrians live and build their settlements on high places that are difficult to reach, close to the sky. This situation allows them to (try to) resist the Assyrian injunction to integrate into their system. While the precariousness of their situation and their political stubbornness are almost understated in the texts of the Middle Assyrian period, these conditions characterize later these narratives, which in any case systematically avoid admitting any cultural, political difference of these cities from Assyria to explain their choices. The rules of composition of the royal inscriptions choose instead to hammer into the texts, sometimes in an overwhelming way, toponyms, oronyms, ethnonyms, and names to identify the enemy when submitted by the Assyrian king. The mere mention of the (geographical) name – a local toponym that does not sound Assyrian – is enough to imply the conquest of a place, an entire environment. Even if the terms quoted are unknown as such and difficult to locate in a spatial dimension for the supposed audience, their listing in the text of the inscription gives the enemy a (historical) presence and agency. This use of geography (and ethnology) gradually constructs an image of the "real" world as the prey of Assyrian conquest planning. The kind of knowledge it presupposes reveals the Assyrian vocation to control and manage it, without explaining the reasons or the logic of the conquest.

On this basis, the efforts made by the palace chancery of Ashurnasirpal II to show the evolution of its ideological discourse – possibly also marked by the need to explain the (re)foundation of the new capital at Calah – were massive, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Not only the archaeological discovery and study of its new capital, Calah (Reade 1982; Oates and Oates 2001), but also the literary development of the narrative in the royal inscriptions has justified the modern perception of the great change in Assyrian politics during this period, corresponding to the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Frahm 2017a). It is easy to recognize, both in the annals and in the "display," summary texts – composed to be integrated into the architecture of the new palace at Calah, associated with the stone reliefs having the same narrative content (Russell 1998; Micale 2011: 121–128) – the place and the function that the "ideogram," of the city had taken in the narrative referring to the king's power, between the obsessive repetition of the toponymy and the mention of his activities of construction and destruction. Reorganizing all the possibilities inherited from the literary chancery tradition, the composition of the inscriptions shows the maximum extension of all the already formalized narrative sequences as well as the topoi used to represent the king and his counterparts. They are enriched by a collection of new details, new precisions, new lexical choices, both concerning the war and building activities of Ashurnasirpal II, his enemies, and his constructions, to offer a view of other dimensions of the king's experiences.

The longer version of the Annals since year 0 the 5th and since year 6th to 18th of his reign contains mainly narratives of military events in mountainous areas. While no toponyms are mentioned in the royal titles at the beginning of the inscriptions, replaced by literary, erudite ethnonyms, each military event is identified by a reference to a city and/or country name, often specified with some geographical information, as oronyms and hydronyms (cf. Grayson 1991:197 (A.0.1011.) I, l.58b–62a). The sums of the enemy settlements conquered and/or destroyed are preferred to lists of foreign toponyms, especially when the number of conquered settlements in a region is important enough (cf. Grayson 1991: 203 (A.0.1011.), ii, l.28b–29). Their numbers reflect the same interest now shown in the narrative for the exact sums of enemy soldiers killed or captured, accounted on the field, as the reliefs show (cf. Pritchard 1974: 74, fig. 236). This new precision in accounting is reminiscent of the listing of operations carried out in the field during the campaign and reported back home to the chancery and bureaucratic services. The names of countries and cities take on a new value in these contexts, and their sequence reappears in the narrative, motivated by the Assyrian marching orientation, as elements of a route, from one (known) city name to another. This textual structure is now used to describe the topography of various regions, not only the Khabur

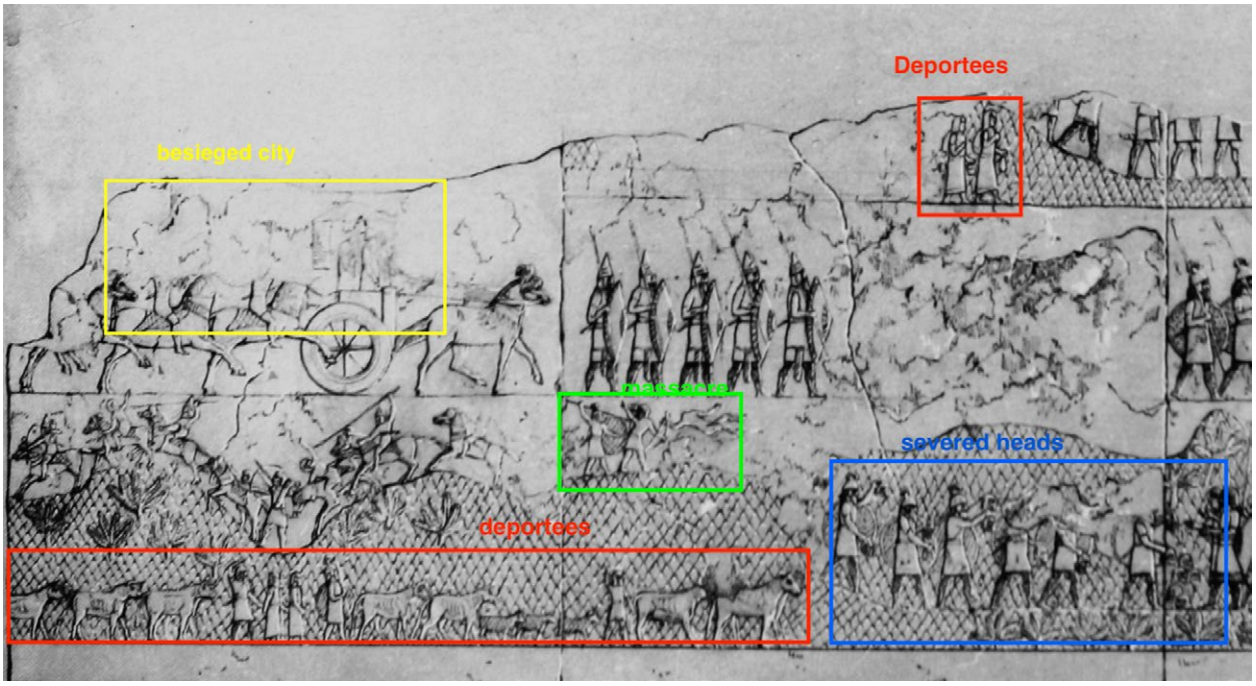

Figure 20. Palace of Sennacherib, Room VII, slabs 12-13 representing the besieged city, the massacre of enemies, pile of severed heads and deportees (after Battini 2022: fig.13).

and Lower Middle Euphrates valleys. The names of enemy kings and leaders are often mentioned as well, thus acknowledging differences in status, at least from the Assyrian point of view. According to the traditional narrative sequence, the terror generated by the advancing campaign of Ashurnasirpal II frightens the enemy, who either submits and pays the tribute or flees to other locations, fortresses situated high on the tops of nearby mountains, close to the sky – like birds (cf. Grayson 1991:197–198, A.0.101.1, i, l.62b–65a). In some cases, the texts acknowledge the good, performative quality of the enemy's fortifications, citing the presence of double, triple, even quadruple city walls and their height (cf. Grayson 1991: 201, A.0.101.1, i, l.113b–115a; and 209, A.0.101.1, ii, l.98b–99a). These strong walls are eventually destroyed along with the rest of the city (Grayson 1991: 202, A.0.101.1, i, l.1b–2a). A "rain of fire" is poured by the king over a well-fortified city (Grayson 1991: 210, A.0.101.1, ii, l. 104b–106a). Fires and flames burning the enemy settlements over their roofs and battlements are often depicted in reliefs (cf. Micale 2011: cat. 8, 35.2, 124, tav. 6.2). This image acquired a special value, possibly for its mythological taste: the shape of a metal brazier on wheels, which was used to heat the halls of the royal palace in Calah, exactly reproduced the ring of the city wall of an enemy city with its towers and battlements – as depicted in the reliefs – inside which the fire burned (Micale 2011: tav. 44, 3; Frahm 2017a: 172, fig. 8.1), to be admired by king and the court.

The wall of the enemy city (or fortress), high and visible from afar, remains in the narrative as one of the preferred backgrounds of the king's military actions, but new elements are now exploited. Ashurnasirpal II, great architect and artist at Calah, builds piles and towers with their corpses, now material exploited to modify, even to decorate, the urban and natural landscape, outside and around the enemy's city wall, visible to all (cf. Grayson 1991: 201–202, A.0.101.1, i, l. 115–118. ii, l. 1–2a). Hands and feet, noses and eyes are cut off; severed heads are hung from trees around the city, while processions of living prisoners alternate with piles of heads (Figure 20) (Dolce 2004). Others are impaled on stakes; children and infants are burned outside the city gates (Bagg 2016). The skins of local nobles and kings are draped and hung over their city walls as a sign and warning – one of them even at Arba'ilu, an Assyrian city (Grayson 1991: 198, A.0.101.1, i, l. 67b–68a; and 200, A.0.101.1, i, l. 110). Sieges of cities and fortresses are mentioned in various campaigns before their conquest, followed by their final destruction, also by fire. Events inside the conquered cities after the sieges are rarely mentioned – and exceptionally represented on the reliefs (Battini forthcoming) –, beyond the raid of the Assyrian army on the local palace: only once is the image of corpses filling the streets, of townhouses streaked with blood, inserted into the narrative (Grayson 1991: 205–206, A.0.101.1, ii, 54b–56a). The reference is to the more common evocations in royal inscriptions of the transformation of the natural environment - plains, valleys, mountains filled with the corpses of the enemies, painted in red

by their blood - result of the massacres carried out by the Assyrian king and army, a new literary topos in the historical narration. Remarkably, the king sometimes transformed the conquered city into an Assyrian "camp" or even a colony, as in the case of Tushan. He rebuilds a palace there, where his statue/stele and monumental inscriptions are installed, as well as the city wall, and he behaves as if he were in his capital, receiving the tributes of the subjugated leaders and kings (Grayson 1991: 202, A.0.101.1, ii, l. 2b–15a), even though the reliefs at Calah show the same scene in his camp (Matthiae 1996a: figs. 2.10–12; Micale and Nadali 2004: 172). In other cases, as at Atlila, the renovation of the palace and the city wall is associated with the change of the toponym, imposing a new one, clearly Assyrian, expressing, as usual, an ideological message (Grayson 1991: 208, A.0.101.1, ii, l. 84b–86a).

Before entering the description of his building activities at Calah, followed by the narration of his campaigns in the West – in the Jazira up to the Mediterranean coast as well as in the South Anatolian mountains – the inscription begins with a different presentation of Ashurnasirpal's royal titles. After a synthesis of his previous conquests, which are spelled out by the mention of the names of countries, a list of toponyms as well as geographical references now identifies what, at least from a modern perspective, could pass for the borders of his kingdom/empire (Grayson 1991: 225, A.0.101.2, l. 10–17a). Mountains, passes, river valleys, seas, mixed with the names of lands/peoples and toponyms of cities, resume and, for modern perception, make visible the political results of the king's campaigns. The point of maximum extension of the empire in all directions is thus established, attested by the presence of the king's governors everywhere. Virtual lines connecting a series of points, the toponyms – not only of conquered cities and fortresses – seem to represent the unity and continuity of the "land of Ashur", the (new) empire, even if the city, the (new) capital, is no longer mentioned in this context as the center of the network.

If the form of the itinerary used by his predecessors is still exploited in the narrative of the march down the valley of the Khabur and in the (Syrian) Lower Middle Euphrates, some variants and new elements appear in Ashurnasirpal II's version. After mentions of "revolts" against the established order, the campaigns in these regions become aggressive and punitive, marked by sieges of cities. Adequate, "realistic" developments are now introduced into the narrative, as an alternative to the enemy's flight into the mountains. Frightened to escape from the Assyrian siege of the city of Suru on the island of Anat, the local "governor" throws himself into the Euphrates with 70 soldiers "to save his life" (Grayson 1991: 213, A.0.101.1, iii, l. 16b–19a). This interesting story is illustrated in a relief (Matthiae 1996a: fig. 2.19; Micale 2011: cat. 2). During the campaign against Bit-Adini, the Assyrian king attacks Kaprabu, a well–fortified city, a "cloud in the sky", so that no immediate submission can be expected. The narrative does not insist on the problems the Assyrian army faced in reaching the city, but it does describe for the first time the siege of the city and its capture by means of "tunnels, battering rams and siege towers" (Grayson 1991: 216, A.0.101.1, iii l. 50b–53a; De Backer 2013; Nadali 2019c). The same strategy is mentioned again, in the same order, for the siege of the city of Udu, near Bit-Zamani land (Grayson 1991: 220, A.0.101.1, iii, l. 110b–111a). The iconography of the reliefs in the throne room of the palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Calah follows and doubles the same narrative pattern and choices (cf. Matthiae 1996a: figs. 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 4.1, 4.2; Micale 2011: cat. 1. 5–11).

The ideological creation of the empire by Ashurnasirpal II: the city, the enemy, and the Assyrian cities

Cities, identified in the inscriptions by their toponymy, and in the reliefs by the standard image of the ring of city walls, essentially represent the enemy, or at least a situation in which the enemy, as the king's opponent, is given a function, an agency, and becomes fully visible in the narrative of the king's political and military activities. This is the result of a long literary and ideological evolution, rooted in an ancient and recognized tradition, which produced stories, and history, associated with the legitimation of the institution of kingship. This aspect of the matter is important because it is during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, in the context of the construction of new urban spaces, of his palace and temples at Calah, that the first fully developed iconographic cycles of "historiographic" narratives with the same function are created, linked to texts. The same forms and contents are also attested in the bronze reliefs of the Balawat Gates, produced during the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and his son and successor, Salmanazar III, in connected workshops that show a direct dependence on the models and style of the White Obelisk.

Since the time of Ashurnasirpal II, it is possible to trace and compare the exploitation of the image of the (enemy) city in the narrative of the inscriptions with the iconographic realizations appearing in the reliefs. The respective lines and levels of development of the two communicative tools and codes intersect in the palace walls and libraries of Calah. If they follow different directions and finally diverge in their representations in the productions of later periods until the end of the empire, it is during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II that narrative structures and iconography overlap and change in the use and

function of the sign/image of the city to communicate the royal ideology. The representation of the besieged enemy city and its conquest, even if it does not convey any new or useful information, becomes more and more frequent in the reliefs, rhythmizing the iconographic narrative, important enough to create scenes in which the king himself observes them from a distance. Their appearance does not oppose, but complements the later, more chaotic, choral field battles in exotic, often southern, environments, showing a different perception of the enemy's presence and action. At least from our point of view, the two media – the discourse of the inscriptions and the iconography of the reliefs – crossed their respective lines of development at the beginning of the 9th century and can be compared in their effects on their audience, people at the receiving end of the act of communication, supposedly able to understand the message itself. In the case of the inscriptions, it is possible to follow the main lines of their literary development since the period of the Middle Assyrian Empire. Instead, the artistic quality of the reliefs in the workshops of Ashurnasirpal II is suddenly so high that it is difficult to imagine that such a level of achievement did not depend on a new competence, based on a conscious effort to show maximum coherence and integration between the two media. Such an evolution of this intellectual and artistic work, and the some of the drastic changes it underwent in its production, can be explained as a solution found to deliver a more elaborated and stronger ideological message to a new audience. It had to correspond to and reveal the political logic and goals of the new Assyrian Empire, offering examples of its mechanisms without proclaiming its rules. This content had to be understood and accepted by an audience larger than the Assyrian gods, the king, the court, and the intellectuals who produced the inscriptions themselves. It now included not only the representatives of foreign powers and states, from ambassadors to hostages or officials bringing their tributes to the capital – often considered the immediate target of the threatening message – but also, perhaps especially, the new Assyrian elites, or simply the people, who were integrated into the management and administration of the empire, needed to keep it moving.

In this system, the representation and identification of the "enemy" of the empire is central. Its existence and resistance are the reasons why, in an empire, an ever-expanding universal machine, the powers and privileges of the king, his army, and his government are legitimized and recognized. The heraldic image of the "king and the lion" perfectly represents the balance of his power, also against nature and culture (Cassin 1981; cf. Matthiae 1996a: 10.16). As I have tried to show, the toponymy of the enemy's cities and lands, without meaningful geographical and topographical references, at least until the 9th century, may have the function of evoking in the inscriptions precisely the space (and the moment) in which the "other", the opponent, shows his agency by crossing the Assyrian king's centrifugal march (Masetti-Rouault 2019b). When iconography enters the communicative act, the same neutral ideogram of the city appears in the narrative series of representations, without characteristics and qualifications in its form to specifically denote an enemy, a people, a culture. The task of representing it as the place and time where the enemy appears is left to the ideal architecture of the ring of city walls, with towers and gates (Jacoby 1991; Micale 2009: 171–178; Albenda 2018).

The representation of the enemy in his city was obviously not the only solution found to highlight and celebrate the Assyrian king's power. The sculpted throne pedestal of Tukulti-Ninurta I or the relief of the Broken Obelisk reveal an early awareness in Assyrian art of the function of the enemy's representation to reveal the nature of kingship. However, inspired by the millennia-old Mesopotamian tradition of creating and depicting the royal persona, Assyrian statuary showing the king alone in his majesty – without the enemy around him – has existed since the 10th century (Matthiae 1996b: 54–57). Only rarely is the image of the enemy exploited in stelae representing the king among a series of divine symbols located in different parts of the empire – integrated into urban centers, buildings, and the natural environment (Pritchard 1969: 152–155; Morandi Bonacossi 1988). On the other hand, in the series of reliefs carved later in the royal palaces of Khorsabad and Nineveh, the "other" finally emerges from the kind of anonymity ensured by the earlier representations. Every enemy – from kings to soldiers, even women and children – better known and studied through imperial economic dynamics, movements, and ceremonies, is identified in the reliefs as belonging to another culture (Wäfler 1975; Matthiae 1996a: 148–153; Brown 2014). Without any explicit racial discrimination, everyone is represented while fighting, falling from the city walls, dying, submitting, standing in line to be deported, or bringing his tribute to the royal court. The details of his aspect, his dress, his behavior, his armament, and his attitudes are emphasized by the sculpture. These data make it possible to recognize in him/her, a non-Assyrian, in all his otherness, thus giving evidence to the universal structure of the empire. In the royal inscriptions, since the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, in narrative sequences prepared by the topos of the enemy's panic upon hearing of the Assyrian army's advance, not only the king's name, but also his intellectual self, his reflections, feelings, movements, and attitudes – even when he is all alone – are known, observed, related, and judged by the narrator, who constructs the relationship of the enemy with the Assyrian king as a novel or a tragedy

(Fales 1992; Dolce 2005; Zawadski 2014). Even the natural landscapes of distant lands under the control of the empire are better known and can be described in an adapted style, including the skylines, even the buildings of foreign cities (cf. Matthiae 1996a: figs. 6.5, 8.16, 8.18). In the royal archives of the Assyrian state, many documents show beyond any doubt that the corresponding bureaucratic services of the empire had knowledge of the geography and toponymy of different, even distant countries and provinces, of their products and productions, notwithstanding the continuous change of the position of the borders, which fluctuated according to the evolution of the political and military situation.

Therefore, it is not possible to ignore or minimize the tendency of the Assyrian chanceries and artistic workshops, in the course of time, towards a closer reproduction of the geographical and topographical details of the environments and of the people object of the Assyrian imperialism, resulting in their identification, shown by means of toponymy and onomastics. Likewise, the eagerness of the Neo-Assyrian chanceries to show their competence in keeping this information, counting, and describing what is taken from the enemy, is more and more evident, proving the success of the system itself. By a statistical evaluation of the documentation, the symbolic representations of foreign cities are certainly attested in the reliefs until the end of the empire. However, since the creation of the Balawat gate bands some of the "rings of walls" are already identified by cuneiform captions, adding toponyms that give the reading of the "ideogram" of the city. In this context, the continuity of the use of the abstract architecture of the enemy cities, as the target and object of the king's siege, or the background of his triumph when he shows his power over the others, is even more problematic and puzzling.

Conclusions

The importance of the city in Assyrian culture and the value attributed to the construction of its structures and spaces in Assyrian ideological discourse – attested from the beginning in royal inscriptions to give an institutional basis to the king's authority – seem to make the almost complete absence of a corresponding iconographic version of the same content a historical phenomenon difficult to understand and resolve. The question is even more challenging when this absence of representation is compared with the appearance of images of enemy cities in monumental contexts at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE. I have tried to trace the origin and creation of the iconographic sign of the city in the exploitation of the toponymy quoted in the royal inscriptions of the Middle Assyrian period. I have assumed that the mention of (possibly previously unknown) foreign toponyms, impossible to locate in a geographically as well as politically organized space, had no real meaning or use in the construction of a mental map of the state and its borders integrated into a geopolitical system. The mention of the foreign toponymy satisfied the need to emphasize the king's fame and success, just as a list of names, a set of points distributed on a generic geographical surface – often the mountains – suggests a reality under the narrative. The image of the (enemy) city in the reliefs, without any characterization sufficient to identify it, or at least to allow its association with a specific culture, would have had the same function. For this reason, it is retained in the iconography, even though in later Neo-Assyrian periods the use of toponymy in texts clearly changed, bringing with it political and administrative information.

On this basis, I would suggest that, as the meaningless toponymy could have done before, so the mute, nondescript linear symbols of the cities appearing in the reliefs of the White Obelisk since the 10th-9th century could have let, even invited, the audience of the iconographic series to recognize them also as a representation of their own city, and themselves in the (resisting) enemy – if they revolted and/or resisted the Assyrian royal power. The image of the besieged, conquered, burned, abandoned cities by their surviving inhabitants was relevant, could speak to a different audience, not only to the (ancient) enemies who were allowed to see them in the Assyrian palaces. While a self-identification with the images of the enemies in the reliefs, as well as with their stories in the inscriptions, was ultimately impossible – as they had become too different, culturally, and morally opposed to the recognized Assyrian identity – the neural ideogram of the cities with their inhabitants, still resisting, attacked and punished by the king, remained there, visible and recognizable. It was ready to be exploited to imagine and explore what happens when someone, even an Assyrian, decides to resist the king's power and revolt. To lock oneself up with one's family and companions in one's own city, country, house will not save any rebel, any opponent, even if he is an Assyrian. The reliefs show coherently, in all its terrible reality and complexity, the consequence of any kind of treason, of breaking the commitment that every Assyrian has silently made with the crown. The mobility of the scenes, especially the sieges of the cities, and the depiction of the emotional state of the enemies, compared to the industrious indifference of the Assyrian army, trigger the reader's identification with them, in their urban space.

These Assyrians, members of the government, chancery, courtiers, as well as secretaries, servants, guards, are not to be confused with the "foreign", non-Assyrian audience of the royal discourse. They are also

the target of royal communication, but they could be identified as the same community of viewers of the stelae and reliefs outside the palace and temples. They are now also inside the official royal spaces, in the new order and setting of the empire, which needed their agency, their work, their investment to subsist and expand beyond the support of the ancient aristocracy. The written record of the Assyrian campaigns was not fully accessible to them, and perhaps not to anyone but the intellectuals who had produced it, even though the changes and developments in the forms and structures of narration of events in the Neo-Assyrian period testify to their adaptation to the tastes of their not-so-virtual audience. In the same way, the ideogram of the enemy cities, from the reduced dimensions of the iconography in the stelae, already placed in open spaces in the city, eventually entered the larger, continuous, more explicit sequence of stone reliefs. The scenes of the enemy cities conquered by the king became an integral part of the first iconographic narratives of royal activities in the reliefs inserted into the architecture of the palaces and temples, until they acquired an autonomous, distinctive function and could be used for more important and detailed descriptions of royal activities – as in the famous case of Sennacherib's siege of Lakish (Matthiae 1996a: 8.23–8.27; Micale 2011: 144–153, cat. 84–87), in the palace of Nineveh.

The Assyrian city, the capital, a creation of its kings, is described in the royal inscriptions as built in a continuous present for the future, under the gaze and view of the gods. It is real, known, the object of the people's experience of spaces and structures, so it does not need an image, a representation for the Assyrians to affirm their identity. The enemy city is a sign, a free, unspecified image, without a history, and can be used to think and project the possibilities of the relationship of everyone, including Assyrians, with the royal power, and to consider the effects. The palace reliefs speak to – and threaten – all who see them, not only to the foreigners who have already submitted, but to the whole Assyrian society, and perhaps to us as well. Instead of dying in a burning city or be deported, they propose an alternative, a solution, to avoid the crisis and the drama of violence and death. From the very beginning, the stelae, and reliefs, together with the ideogram of the city, have offered the iconographic translation of what in the texts are the lists of tribute: peaceful lines of subjugated peoples and court officials bringing to the king what is due to him, another way of identifying each people, citizen, man and women.

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Chapter 23:
Whose head is hanging from the tree?

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...и взяша голову его, и во лбѣ его здѣлаша чашю, оковавше лобъ его, и пьяху в нем.
Повѣсть временныхъ лѣт, лѣто 6480 (972)
Primary Chronicle, year 6480 (972 CE)

Вы уходите в небытие, а мне радостно будет из чаши, в которую вы превращаетесь, выпить за бытие. ... Тут же покровы головы потемнели и съежились, потом отвалились кусками, глаза исчезли, и вскоре Маргарита увидела на блюде желтоватый, с изумрудными глазами и жемчужными зубами, на золотой ноге, череп. Крышка черепа откинулась на шарнире.
М. А. Булгаков. *Мастер и Маргарита*
M. A. Bulgakov. *Master and Margarita*

Why not—since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce?
Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs to be of use.
G. G. Byron. *Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed from a Skull*

Abstract[1]. The article deals with deconstructing one of the most long-living myths of Assyriology—the identification of the head hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal as the head of his enemy, the Elamite king Te'umman. I prove that this head belongs to another and much more hated enemy of the Assyrian king, the traitor Nabû-bēl-šumāti, whose dead body Ashurbanipal ordered to decapitate.

Keywords: pictorial narrative cycles, principles of Assyrian programmatic décor, "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal, severed heads, ceremonies with and libations over heads and skulls, ugly enemies, Nabû-bēl-šumāti, Ashurbanipal, Te'umman.

Once[1] upon a time Tallay (Tali) and I were as usual discussing Mesopotamian art over a cup of coffee at the cafeteria of the Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus. I have mentioned in passing "the head of Te'umman" hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal. Tali pointed out that this head should not be referred to as the head of Te'umman anymore in light of the (then) latest publication. Years passed and the said hanging head is still designated "the head of Te'umman." By contributing this article to Tali's Festschrift, I am returning an old debt.

Introduction

The identification of the head hanging down the tree in the so-called "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal (Figure 1) as the head of the Elamite king Te'umman is one of the steadiest myths in Assyriology. No proof was provided that this is indeed Te'umman's head. Instead phrases like "a severed head, evidently that of Te-umman" were pushed through.[2] Pauline Albenda was the first one who tried to really prove that this head belonged to Te'umman, claiming its resemblance to Te'umman's depictions on the Til-Tuba battle relief (Albenda 1977: 29).

The article that Tali referred to in our conversation is that of Constanze Schmidt-Collinet, who correctly claimed already in 1997 that this head does not belong to Te'umman (Schmidt-Collinet 1997: 301). But other ideas of Schmidt-Collinet in this article and the article in general are marked with sweeping and baseless hypercriticism.[3] For this reason her important point

[1] All the abbreviations in this article are in accordance with the *RlA*. Writing this article was made possible by the support of the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 797758.

[2] Barnett (1976: 20). Underlining by the present author. Similarly Albenda 1977: 29. R. Barnett claimed also that a "severed hand, doubtless Te-umman's" attached to a palm tree behind Ashurbanipal's coach is holding a wand (*ibid.*). But what is really doubtless is that the upright position of this hand and the very fact that it can hold anything makes it obvious that this hand belongs to a living person.

[3] Schmidt-Collinet 1997. For instance, she denies that the enthroned figure in a mural crown in the "Garden Scene" relief is a queen, claiming that Assyrian queens have never been depicted; on the visibility of Assyrian queens, see May 2018. She refutes that the images wearing mural crowns are Assyrian queens and suggests that

Figure 1. The "Garden Scene." Detail. Room S[1] of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. After Barnett 1976: 65. BM 124920.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

that the head in the "Garden Scene" does not belong to Te'umman was ignored. Schmidt-Collinet also did not propose whom this head might belong to; she just pointed out that the claim that it is Te'umman's lacks proof.

Ashurbanipal boasted of decapitating many of his enemies besides Te'umman. He was not the first Assyrian king to perform rituals with severed heads of his enemies—the relief of Ashurnasirpal II presents the earliest pictorial evidence for plays with severed heads during an Assyrian triumph (May 2012: 464 with fig. 1). The text of Ashurbanipal's father Esarhaddon describes a triumphal procession with severed heads of Abdi-Milkūti of Sidon and Sanda-uarri, king of Kundi and Sissû, whom he decapitated in the same year (RINAP 4 no. 1 iii 20–38). Processions and ceremonies with severed heads of enemies were common in Assyria. The preserved evidence makes the case of the severed head of Te'umman the best-documented instance of decapitation of an enemy of Assyria, but it is by no means unique. Triumphal processions with severed heads were so popular and common in Assyria that they influenced the later Babylonian milieu. The Neo-Babylonian text known as *The King of Justice* (Nebuchadnezzar II or, perhaps, Nabonidus) describes a ritual performed with the head of a false witness.[4] It includes parading a severed head of a criminal through the land and exhibiting it at the gates of a court.

Why despite ample evidence for the Assyrian rites with severed heads the idea that the head, depicted in the "Garden Scene" is that of Te'umman prevailed for such a long time without even an attempt to underpin this opinion? Most obviously, the flight, capture and decapitation of Te'umman and the express delivery of his head to the Assyrian commandment depicted with the use of animation effects on the reliefs of the battle at the Ulai river, impressed art historians[5] and gave a great push to the claim that the severed head in the "Garden Scene" must be the head of Te'umman. The excellent state of preservation of the Ulai-river battle reliefs and their captions made reading their pictorial narration easy. This played a decisive role in the interpretation of the severed head in the "Garden Scene" as the head of Te'umman. Textual material describing Ashurbanipal's triumphal itinerary through Assyria with the severed head of Te'umman was known to philologists[6] and provided further support for this art-historical interpretation. The severed head of Te'umman on the reliefs of Room XXXIII was automatically identified with the severed head in the "Garden Scene." Typically, until recently nobody even tried to prove that the head in the "Garden Scene" is indeed the head of Te'umman and this notion remained "common knowledge," passing from one publication to another without any proof. Unsubstantiated, it was repeated in numerous lectures and presentations as self-evident. No wonder this "common knowledge" remained unproved, because it cannot be proved.

these are depictions of eunuchs. These are images on the stela of queen Libbāli-šarrat identified by an inscription and on the bronze relief with representations of Naqī'a and Esarhaddon. On the latter Naqī'a's femininity is clinched by the mirror she is holding (see May 2018 with further literature). Schmidt-Collinet further claims that sons of Assyrian kings could be eunuchs. This proposal is so baseless that there is no need to discuss it.

[4] Schaudig 2001: 582; col. III: 3′–15′. I am indebted to my late *Doctorvater,* Victor Hurowitz for this reference.

[5] South-West Palace at Nineveh, Room XXXIII; Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 286–299.

[6] See May 2012: 471–473 with further references.

Whose head is hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal, then? I have touched upon the subject in my research on the Assyrian triumph and have later returned to it in my article on the visibility of the Neo-Assyrian women (May 2012: 478–480; May 2018: 260). I have demonstrated that this is the head of Nabû-bēl-šumāti. This was not, however, the major topic of either paper, so I treated the subject in passing. Recently the first attempt to ground the claim that the head which is hanging down the tree in the "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal is the head of Te'umman was made by Alessandra Gilibert (2018). Consequently the subject requires a thorough discussion.

Ceremonies with Severed Heads Performed by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal

Te'umman's head was not the only severed head of an enemy represented on the reliefs of Ashurbanipal. The battle at the Ulai river in Room XXXIII of the South-West Palace with the pictorial narration of the decapitation of Te'umman occupied only half of the space on its walls and was only one of three themes of the programmatic décor of this room. The rest of its walls was covered with the representations of the triumphs at Madaktu and Arbela (Barnett *et al.* 1998: 286; May 2012: 481, fig. 17). In the second and third registers of the slabs, two men with heads hanging from their necks are dragged towards Ashurbanipal mounted on his chariot and preceded by rows of royal officials (Figure 2).[7] The two men with the heads on their necks are the unfortunate sons of Bēl-iqīša: Dunānu of Gambulu and of his brother Samgunu. Ashurbanipal's Prism Kh no. 7 vi 7″–8″ describes the entrance of the triumphal procession with the heads of Te'umman hung around Dunānu's neck and of Ištar-nandi (Šutur-Naḫūndi) hung around Samgunu's to Nineveh :[8]

> SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-*˹*um*˺*-man* ˹MAN˺ [KUR ELAM.MA^{ki}] *ina* GÚ ^{m}*Du-na-nu* [*a-lul*] SAG.DU ^{md}*Iš-tar-na-an-di ina* GÚ ˹^{m}*Sa*˺-[*am-gu-nu*] ŠEŠ ˹^{m}*Du*˺*-na-nu tar-den-nu* [*a-lul*] *it-ti ki-šit-ti* KUR ˹ELAM.˺[MA^{ki} *šal*]-˹*la*˺*-at-ti* KUR *Gam-*˹*bu*˺-[*li*] *ša ina qí-bit* AN.ŠÁR *ik-šu-da* ˹ŠU^{II}˺-[*a-a*] ˹*it*˺*-ti* ^{lú}NAR^{meš} *e-piš nin-*˹*gu*˺-[*ti*] *a-na* ^{uru}NINA^{ki} *e-ru-ub ina* ḪÚL˹^{meš}˺
>
> "The cut off head of Te'umman, king of [Elam I hung] on the neck of Dunānu; the head of Ištar-nandi [I hung] on the neck of Sa[mgunu], younger brother of Dunānu. I made a musical celebration with the spoil of Ela[m], booty (also means POW – *N.N.M.*) of Gambu[lu], which my hands captured on order of Aššur, (and) with the musicians I made a triumphal entrance to Nineveh in joy".

Figure 2. Triumphs at Madaktu and Arbela. Room XXXIII of the South-West Palace. Detail: Dunānu of Gambulu and his brother Samgunu with the heads of Te'umman and Ištar-nandi (Šutur-Naḫūndi) hanging around their necks. After Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 305. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Besides Nineveh and Arbela (Milqia), the triumphal procession entered Aššur where the triumph culminated as the celebration of the main, the New Year *akītu* of the state, the *akītu* of Aššur. Dunānu and Samgunu were dragged to Aššur too[9] apparently still with the severed

[7] Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 304, 305, 312, here enlarged; May 2012: 482, fig. 18. According to the epigraph in one of these registers this is the triumph at Arbela (Slab 6, Gerardi 1988: 32–33).

[8] More damaged Prism C vii 47–53 = RINAP 5/1 3 no. 6: 47–53 contained the same information, but the name of the city entered by the triumphal procession was omitted. Prism B vi 50–56 = RINAP 5/1 no. 3 vi 42–47 and no. 4 vi 44–49 drops the information about the cut-off head of Ištar-nandi hanging from the neck of Samgunu, and mentions only Dunānu with the head of Te'umman.

[9] RINAP 5/1 no. 3 vi 60–70, no. 6 vii 14′–19′, no. 7 vii 3–10 and May 2012: 472–473.

heads on their necks. Among the triumph ceremonies of Ashurbanipal celebrating his victory over Te'umman in 653 BCE this one was the most pompous. But before the New Year feast at Aššur, a libation over the head of Te'umman was performed at the gate of Arbela (May 2012: 473, 482–483).

By this action Ashurbanipal proudly claimed "restoring" the tradition of libating over the severed heads of enemies. His epigraph on tablets clearly points out that he revived an ancient tradition of libation over enemies' severed heads prescribed in an omen (K. 2674 +, i 14′–ii 3; "Te'umman and Dunānu cycle"):[10]

> i14′*a-na-ku* ^{m}AN.ŠÁR—DÙ—A MAN KUR *Aš+šur*^{ki} SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man* [MAN] KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} i15′*ina* GABA ABUL MURUB$_4$ URU *muḫ-ḫu-riš ú-*[*maḫ*]*-ḫir* i16′*ša ul-tu ul-la i-na ba-ru-ti qa-bu-u um-ma* [SAG].^{r}DU^{1}^{meš} i17′^{lú}KÚR^{meš}*-ka ta-na-*[*kis*] ii^{1}GEŠTIN^{meš} UGU-[*šú*]*-nu ta-naq-qí ša* x[...] ii^{2}*e-nen-*[*na* (^{d}UT]U ^{d}IŠKUR) *ina* LAL-*ia* [... ii^{3}SAG.DU]^{meš} ^{lú}KÚR^{meš}*-ia ak-*<<*ki*>>*-kis* GEŠTIN *aq-*^{r}*qa*^{1}*-*[*a* UGU-*šú-nu*]
>
> "I, Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, the (cut off) head of Te'umman, king of Elam, in front of city gates of the inner city I presented as an offering. That, which from the days of old it was declared in an omen, saying: "Cut off heads of your enemies, libate wine upon them," now Šamaš and Adad in my time [...]. I cut off [heads] of my enemies, libated wine [upon them]".

The libation over the severed head of Te'umman was not a single incident, but the first in a series of carefully planned media events. All the aforementioned adventures of the heads of Te'umman and Šutur-Naḫūndi were the start of Ashurbanipal's programmatic rituals with severed heads.

The libation over Te'umman's head was just the first case in the row of the similar events which all together marked the (re-)invention of tradition. A ceremony with severed heads was an important part of a triumphal rite, whether it included a libation or not. This ancient tradition was either revived or given a new setting by Esarhaddon[11] and Ashurbanipal. Esarhaddon's Nineveh Prism A reads as follows (RINAP 4 no. 1 iii 32–38):[12]

> *ina* ^{iti}DU$_6$ SAG.DU ^{m}*Ab-di-mil-ku-ut-ti ina* ^{iti}ŠE SAG.DU ^{m}*Sa-an-du-ar-ri ina* l-*et* MU.AN.NA *ú-nak-ki-is-ma mah-ru-u la u-hi-ir-ma u-sah-mi-ta* EGIR-*ú áš-šu da-na-an* ^{d}*Aš-šur* EN-*ia* UN^{meš} *kul-Iu-mi-im-ma ina ki-šá-di* ^{lú}GAL^{meš} *su-un a-lul-ma it-ti* ^{lú}NAR *ù* ^{giš}ZÀ.MÍ *ina re-bet* NINA^{ki} *e-te-et-ti-iq*
>
> "In the month of Tašrītu the head of Abdi-Milkūtti, in the month of Addaru the head of Sanda-uarri I cut off in one year. With the former I was not late; I hastened with the latter. In order to show the people the might of Aššur, my lord, I hung (their heads) on the necks of their magnates and with singer(s) and lyre I passed through the thoroughfare of Nineveh".

Ashurbanipal's Prisms B, C, D and Kh [13] provide striking evidence for the continuation of the triumphal rites from the times of Esarhaddon:

> *ni-kis* SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man ina* GABA KÁ.GAL MURUB$_4$ URU *ša* ^{uru}NINA *ú-maḫ-ḫi-ra maḫ-ḫu-riš áš-šú da-na-an* AN.ŠÁR *u* ^{d}15 EN.MEŠ*-ia* UN^{meš} *kul-lu-me ni-kis* SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man* MAN KUR ELAM.MA^{ki}
>
> "The cut-off head of Te'umman in front of the city gates of the Inner City of Nineveh I presented as an offering in order to show the people the might of Aššur and Ištar, my lords—the cut-off head of Te'umman, the king of Elam!"

The scheme is the same in Ashurbanipal's Prisms and Esarhaddon's Nineveh Prism A (RINAP 4 no. 1 iii 36). First the public purpose of the ritual is stated in exactly the same words: *áš-šu da-na-an* ^{d}*Aš-šur* EN-*ia* UN^{meš} *kul-lu-mi-im-ma,* "to show the people the might of Aššur, my lord." After this statement follows the description of the ritual action itself. In Esarhaddon's Nineveh prism it is the triumphal procession through the streets of Nineveh with severed heads of the hostile kings hanging from the necks of their nobles. In the Prisms of Ashurbanipal exactly the same kind of procession is described a few lines before the passage quoted above.[14] These triumphal processions of both Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal were joyful events accompanied by musical performance. But Ashurbanipal added a new "ancient" rite that terminated them—the libation over a severed head of an enemy. This rite was followed (at any rate in Nineveh) by the exposure of this head for the observance of the people. In the Prisms of Ashurbanipal the expression *ni-kis* SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man*, "the cut-off head of Te'umman" is repeated twice when his head is presented as an "offering." The repetition of *ni-kis* SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man* after *áš-šu da-na-an* ^{d}*Aš-šur u* ^{d}15 EN^{meš}*-ia* UN^{meš} *kul-lu-mi-im-ma*[15] creates the dramatic

[10] K. 2674 + , i 14′–ii 3; "Te'umman and Dunānu cycle." Fuchs *apud* Borger 1996: 301–302, no. 14 = RINAP 5/2 no. 161 i 14′–ii 3. To the best of my knowledge, no such an omen was found.

[11] See above, p. 315.

[12] The same passage partly preserved in Nineveh Prism D (RINAP 4 no. 6 ii′ 47′–49′).

[13] RINAP 5/1 no. 3 vi 57–60 (Prism B), no. 4 vi 60–63 (Prism D), no. 6 vii 2′–6′ (Prism C) and no. 7 vi 24″–27″ (Prism Kh).08

[14] See p. 315 with fn. 8.

[15] "To show the people the might of Aššur and Ištar, my lords." In the texts of Ashurbanipal, Ištar, with whom Ashurbanipal had special relationship in general and on his seventh campaign against Te'umman especially, is inserted after "to show the people the might of Aššur and Ištar, my lords," (RINAP 5/1 no. 3 vi 59, no. 4 vi 62).

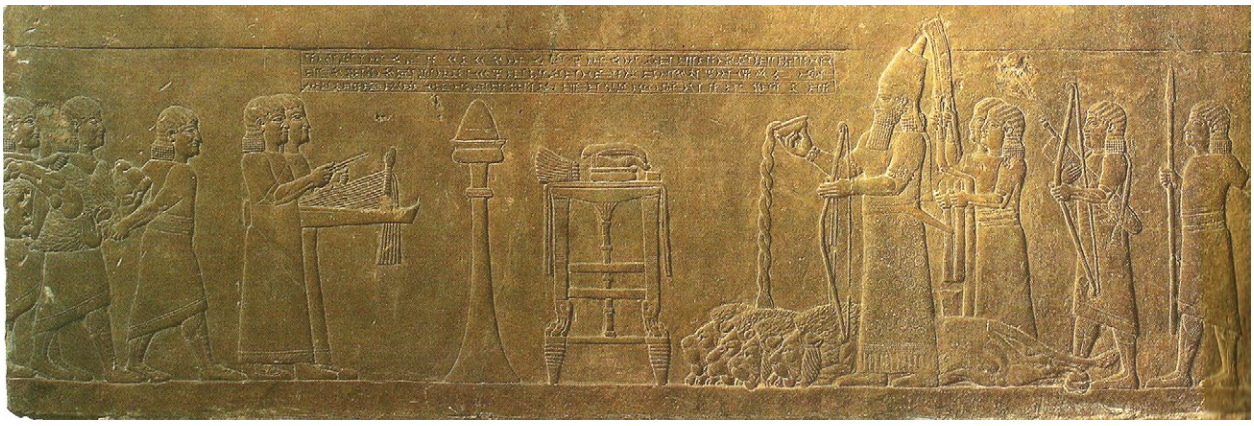

Figure 3. Ashurbanipal's lion hunt and offering of the hunt prey. Detail. The libation over the heads of killed lions is performed in front of an incense burner and an offering table loaded with other offerings. Room S[1] of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

effect and stresses the public importance of the newly introduced rite. Displaying Te'umman's head for observance by the people of Assyria was the purpose of the triumphal *akītu*-procession—the main media event of the year, the triumph of 653 BCE.

Ashurbanipal's Prisms B vi 56–57, C vii 2′–3′ and D vi 60[16] and lines i 15′–16′ of his epigraph on tablets K. 2674 + = no. 14[17] are identical. Both the Prisms and the epigraph point to the place opposite of the gates of the Inner City (the citadel) as the spot where the public exposure takes place: SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man* (...) *ina* GABA ABUL MURUB$_4$ URU *muḫ-ḫu-riš ú-maḫ-ḫir*, "The cut-off head of Te'umman (...) in front of the city gates of the Inner City of Nineveh I presented as an offering." The Prisms are also more concrete—they name the city—Nineveh. The Prisms speak just about the exposure of Te'umman's head, while the epigraph includes also the libation over a severed head. The description of the "revival" of the ancient libation ritual in epigraph no. 14 (lines i 17′-ii 3) replaces simple *ni-kis* SAG.DU ^{m}*Te-um-man* (MAN KUR ELAM.MA^{ki}) in the Prisms. The epigraph is purposefully less concrete about the city where the libation takes place. The epigraphs on tablets were only "blanks"—the exact details, such as cities' names were to be inserted when a specific epigraph was incised on a specific relief. The wording of line ii 3 of epigraph no. 14 stresses that the libation rite was performed in multiple locations: [SAG.DU]^{meš} ^{lú}KÚR^{meš}*ia ak-<<ki>>-kis* GEŠTIN *aq-*ʳ*qa*¹-[*a* UGU-*šú-nu*], "I cut off [heads] of my enemies, libated wine upon [them]." This epigraph is usually associated with the relief of the North Palace Room I that depicts the libation over a severed head at the gates of the Inner City of Arbela.[18] But the wording of the Prisms, which is partly identical with that of the epigraph (particularly the expression *ú-maḫ-ḫi-ra maḫ-ḫu-riš*, "presented as an offering" regarding the severed heads) points out that the libations were performed over these heads at the gates of the inner cities of the Assyrian administrative and religious capitals before displaying them for public observance.

Dominik Bonatz questioned Ashurbanipal's epigraph no. 14 claim for the antiquity of the tradition of offering of and libation over the severed head of an enemy. In Bonatz' view it was an innovation introduced by Ashurbanipal especially for Te'umman and not the resurrection of an ancient practice (Bonatz 2004: 99–100). Nevertheless, decapitation undoubtedly had ritual character in Mesopotamia since very early periods.[19] The aforementioned Ashurnasirpal II's visual representations of royal triumph accompanied by music, hand clapping and playing with the heads[20] provide proof of existance of rituals with severed human heads already in the early NA period. The libations over the heads of offered animals—both hunt prey and sacrificial animals—are known. Ashurnasirpal II's and Ashurbanipal's reliefs show these kings libating over the heads of hunted bulls and lions.[21] In the case of Ashurbanipal—on the relief which decorates the walls of Room S[1] together with the "Garden Scene"—the libation is performed before an incense burner and an offering table loaded with typical offerings. The killed lions replace sacrificial animals (Figure 3). The libation over Te'umman's head at the gates of the citadel of Arbela was made in exactly the same cultic setting—in front of the loaded offering table and the

[16] Kh vi 24″ is mostly restored.
[17] Here and below no. 14 is quoted in accordance with Fuchs *apud* Borger 1996: 301–302.
[18] See May 2012: 483–485 with figs. 20–21 and further references.
[19] See May 2012.
[20] Layard 1853: pls. 22, 23, 30; May 2012: 464, fig. 1. Decorations of Ashurnasirpal's throne room.
[21] Meuszynski: pl. 1, B18–20 provides a clear parallel between the libations of the hunt-prey heads (B19–20) and the supplication of a hostile ruler (B20); Layard 1853: pls. 10, 12; Barnett 1976: pl. 59; May 2012: 464, 465, figs. 1–3.

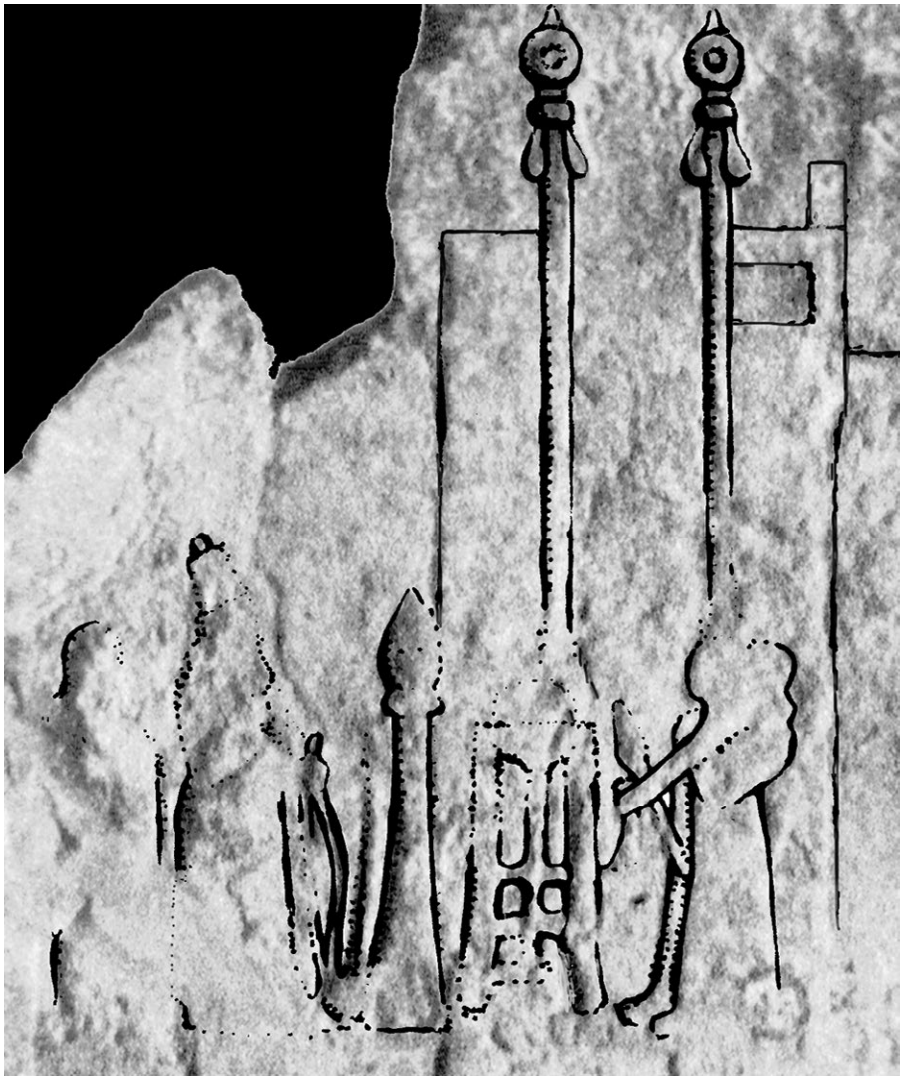

Figure 4. The libation over Te'umman's head at the gates of the citadel of Arbela. Room I of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. Detail. © Natalie Naomi May.

incense burner (Figure 4). The libation over the lions' heads is described in the Assyrian Victory and Lion Hunt Ritual.[22]

During the *akītu* rites on Nisannu 7th–8th, the king performed libations over the heads of sacrificial animals (SAA 20 15 ii 11′). In his letter to the king Esarhaddon's chief exorcist Marduk-šākin-šumi asks royal permission to bring skulls to the *qersu*[23] in order to perform the *dullu*-ritual.[24] Though the libation is not specifically described as taking place during this ritual, the cultic character of the ceremony performed with the skulls is obvious. Ashurbanipal confluenced triumphal processions with severed heads—a ceremony held already by his father—with the public offering of these heads and libations over them at the gates of the citadels of Assyrian cities. The "offering" of the severed head with the libation over it solemnly rounded off the triumph—the central media event of the Assyrian empire. The libation over the severed head of an enemy was probably reinvented by Ashurbanipal based on the existing rituals of libation over the heads of sacrificial animals, but it was not reinvented exceptionally for Te'umman's head.

The "Garden Scene" of Ashurbanipal is another variant of a libation over the severed head of an enemy. Here the libation does not terminate the triumph; it is not a part of an offering rite or of a public ceremony. Ashurbanipal and his queen are depicted raising wine bowls; a severed head is hanging from the tree nearby. The association between the letter of Marduk-šākin-

[22] K. 9923 rev. 2–5, SAA 20 18 = May 2012: 463. Previously called "Assyrian War Ritual."
[23] SAA 10 264. See May 2010a.
[24] SAA 10, 264: 6–10; not dated, but attributed to Esarhaddon on the ground that all the datable letters of this author belong to the late reign of this king; PNA: 724b.

šumi (SAA 10 264) and Ashurbanipal's vine arbour was made already by Karlheinz Deller.[25] Both ceremonies were performed in *qersus*;[26] both involved a severed head or skulls. Very short SAA 10 264, does not provide clarity about the publicity of the rites it relates to, but since these rites take place in *qersu*, it is clear that the ritual was not performed at the city gate. Presence of the queen in the vine arbour excluded wide publicity of the ceremony, but female staff, royal eunuchs, and at least one priest were present at it, as well as Elamite kings. Since all the rites performed with Te'umman's head aimed at an exteremely wide audience—entire cities—the identification of the head hanging from the tree as that of Te'umman's is ruled out. Te'umman's head ended up by being exhibited at the gates of the Nineveh citadel.[27]

Principles of Programmatic Décor in Late Assyrian Art and the Programmatic Décor of Room S[1]

The "Garden Scene" relief with the king and the queen libating over a severed head, although in the focus of the visual narration, is not the single scene that decorated Room S[1] of the North Palace. The entire cycle is complex and provides the historical setting for its central scene—the royal banquet. Alessandra Gilibert (2018) compiled all bibliographic references in order to show that the "Garden Scene" contains multiple allusions—a claim first made by Pauline Albenda (1976; 1977). But despite all the allusions, the basic principle of arrangement of Assyrian palace reliefs is that every scene can only represent a single event.[28] This is clearly stated by epigraphs. Starting with Shalmaneser III at least, epigraphs systematically accompany monumental depictions and explain their content. These captions serve the same function as titles of paintings in the modern era: they define the content and the subject-matter of a representation, disregarding whatever complex allusions to its cultural context, ancient or modern. The epigraphs of Ashurbanipal are longer and more detailed than those of his predecessors and often concretely refer to particular nuances of pictorial narratives.[29]

In the Late Assyrian palaces each room or space was usually adorned with scenes related to a single campaign, with the probable exception of the throne rooms. Thus Room M, the throne room of the North Palace, is decorated with depictions of wars in Babylonia and Elam and the related triumph of 645 BCE, as well as with scenes of the Egyptian campaign of Ashurbanipal. But throne room M with the imagery related to more than one campaign is rather exceptional than common. Display of more than one campaign on walls of the same room is apparently the feature special for the Assyrian throne rooms.[30] Starting with Sargon II at the latest, each smaller room was dedicated to a single historical event—e.g., siege of one city—with a tendency to specify each of these events in great detail.[31] The most famous example of a smaller room with a depiction of a siege of a single city is the "Lachish room" that displays the siege of this city.[32]

A number of events of a certain annual campaign, could be arranged in a single cycle and represented in a single room. Such arrangement was used for larger rooms. Room XXXIII of the South-West Palace with the cycle depicting the Elamite campaign of 653 BCE against Te'umman is the best example for the choice of the major campaign as the topic for the décor of the major room. In such cases separate events of a cycle were mostly represented in separate registers, each accompanied by an epigraph. The relief of the battle at the river Ulai does not have registers; it transmits the chaos of the battle. The epigraphs lead the spectator through this chaos and help him to follow Te'umman's flight and death.

Similarly to the décor of the rooms of Sargon II's, Sennacherib's and Ashurbanipal's palaces, the reliefs of Room S upper storey (S[1]) of the North Palace constitute a cycle dedicated to a single campaign. This is the last Elamite campaign of Ashurbanipal, the campaign against Ummanaldašu (III) and Tammarītu (II) with its culmination—the celebration of the victory over these kings in 645 BCE.[33] Like the reliefs

[25] Deller 1987: 233–234. K. Deller believed that the letter was addressed to Esarhaddon.
[26] For *qersu*, see May 2010a.
[27] See above, pp. 315–318.
[28] See also below.
[29] Gerardi 1988: 4–10 distinguishes three types of epigraphs on Ashurbanipal's reliefs: labels, *anāku*-epigraphs and descriptive epigraphs, all of which existed already on the reliefs of Sennacherib. She demonstrates that the *anāku*-epigraphs describe the entire scene, while the descriptive epigraphs focus on the details of the pictorial narrative.
[30] R. Barnett for instance considered representation of two different campaigns in the same room exceptional (Barnett 1976: 30). J. E. Reade compared the subject-matter arrangement of Room M with that of Display Inscriptions (Reade 2022: 26).
Throne rooms, due to their larger size on one hand and being the focus of royal propaganda on the other, apparently could display few major campaigns. But besides the North Palace Room M, the only other preserved example is the throne room of the early Neo-Assyrian palace of Ashurnasirpal II. It is decorated with depictions of a number of different campaigns too. It is most plausible that the preserved reliefs of Tiglath-pileser III belonged to his throne room as well. D. Nadali (2007: 60, n. 7) presumes that "the throne rooms were usually devoted to a general summary of the royal deeds." He, however, could not reconstruct the subject-matter of Sennacherib's throne room (Nadali 2008) because of its poor state of preservation, and especially because none of its captions preserved.
[31] See Reade 1979 and 2022 on the principles of arranging units of pictorial narratives.
[32] SW Palace, Room XXVI, Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 322–352. These reliefs also lack registers, but the purpose of the artist here was to reflect the turbulence of assault on the city set within a hilly landscape.
[33] See also May 2012: 477–480 with figs. 14–16 and Nadali 2007: 60–61, 64, 67–69.

of Room XXXIII of the South-West Palace, the reliefs of Room S[1] contain three subjects-matters or parts.[34] The first subject-matter in Room S[1] is the campaign itself and the related triumph. William Boutcher's drawing preserved three almost complete registers: the upper one represents the supplication of an Elamite king before the Assyrian royal chariot, the middle one shows the siege and surrender of an Elamite city,[35] and the lower one depicts the solemn presentation of the booty to the the Assyrian king mounted on his chariot (Figure 5). An Elamite in his royal attire, is apparently Ummanaldašu, but may alternatively be Tammarītu or Pa'ê, who both sought refuge at Ashurbanipal's court.[36] More fragments contained the depictions of an Assyrian camp and the assault of the Elamite city Ḫamānu (Barnett 1976: pl. 66; RINAP 5/1 no. 41). The depiction of the siege of Ḫamānu proves unequivocally that the pictorial narrative of Room S[1] is dedicated to the campaign against Ummanaldašu since Ḫamānu was sacked in the course of this campaign (RINAP 5/1 no. 7 ix 12″; no. 9 iv 3, 21, 23; no. 11 v 46, 68, 70, vii 64).

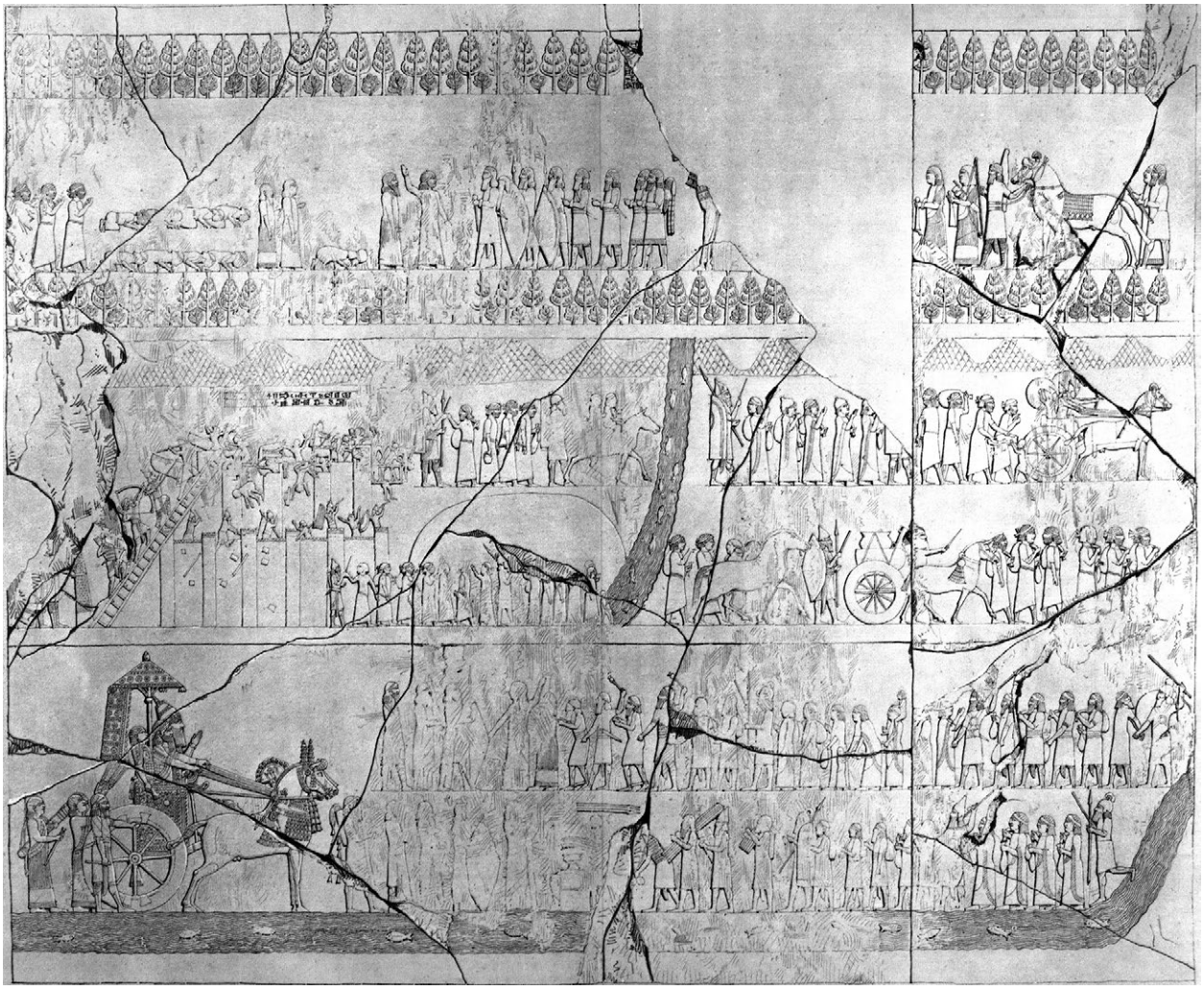

Figure 5. The 645 BCE triumph (Elamite and Babylonian campaigns). Surrender of Ummanaldašu III (?). Room S[1] of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. After Barnett 1976: pl. 60. Pictorial Repertory of Room S[1]. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

[34] Barnett 1976: pls. 56–66. None of the reliefs in Barnett 1976: pl. 62 and not all of pl. 66 belonged to Room S[1] (J. E. Reade, personal communication, and Reade 2022: 85, 89). In Room XXXIII, which is dedicated to the campaign against Te'umman, these are the battle of the Ulai river and two triumphs—at Madaktu and at Arbela, see above, pp. 315–318.

[35] This is confirmed by the epigraph (RINAP 5/1 no. 44), but the name of the city in it is unfortunately broken.

[36] The narrations about Tammarītu (twice) and Pa'ê asking Ashurbanipal for refuge are interwoven into the report about the campaign against Ummanaldašu (RINAP 5/1 no. 9 iii 70–81; no. 11 v 23–40; vii 51–57).

The second topic of Room S[1] is the royal lion hunt (Figure 6).[37] The royal banquet in the garden is the third topic of this room's reliefs (Figure 7). Richard D. Barnett identified the relief with the battle and the triumph scenes as the surrender of Ummanaldašu (Barnett 1976: 54 and pls. 60–61). He interpreted Ashurbanipal's "Garden Scene" as a representation of this Elamite king's "final humiliation." Barnett's identification is no doubt correct since it is based on the epigraph attached to this relief:[38]

Figure 6. Ashurbanipal's royal lion hunt. Room S[1] of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. BM 124886 and BM 124887. After Barnett 1976: pl. 59. Pictorial Repertory of Room S[1]. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

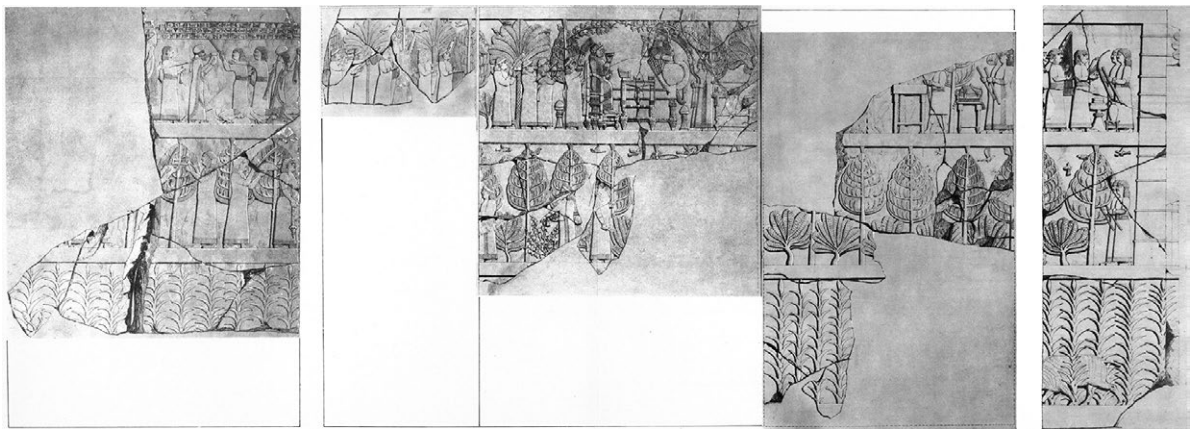

Figure 7. Ashurbanipal's "Garden Scene." The entire relief. Room S[1] of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal. After Barnett 1976: pl. 63. Pictorial Repertory of Room S[1]. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

[37] This part is especially rich with epigraphs. One of them states that some descendant of Urtaku, the king of Elam, was attacked by a lion and begged Ashurbanipal for protection. RINAP 5/1 no. 54 restores his name as Ummanappa, son of Urtaku, but Boutcher's handcopy of this now lost epigraph (Barnett 1976: pl. 56) shows a gap big enough to accommodate three generations as it appears in the epigraph on tablets from the "Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and Tammarītu cycle," K. 2642 + , iv 7′–8′ and K. 4457 + , 21–22: [m]ʳ*Um*¹-*ba-ki-den-nu* A m*Um-man-ap-pi* A m*Ur-ta-ki* MAN KUR ELAM^{ki} (Fuchs *apud* Borger 1996: 317, no. 75 = RINAP 5/2 nos. 173 and 178).

[38] RINAP 5/1 50 1–3 (p. 340). Barnett, however, failed to realize that this same epigraph rules out that the head hanging down the tree on the next slab could be Te'umman's.

> [2][... m*Tam-ma-ri-tú*? m*Pa-ʾe-e*? m*Um-man-al*]-ʳ*daš*? LUGALᵐᵉš *šá* KUR ELAM.MAᵏⁱ *šá ina tukul-ti* AN.ŠÁR *u* ᵈNIN.LÍL *ik-šu-ʳdaˀ* ŠUᴵᴵ-[*a-a*] [3][...]-*a*? [*i*]-ʳ*ziˀ-zu-ma nap-tan* MAN-*ti-šú-nu* ŠUᴵᴵ *ra-me-ni-šú-nu e-pu-šá-ma ú-še-rib-u-ni ina* [IGI-*ia*]
>
> "(As for) *Tammarītu, Paʾê*, (*and*) *Ummanalda*]*šu* (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), kings of Elam whom [I] had defeat[ed] with the support of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Mullissu, [...] they [sto]od [...] and (then) they prepared their royal meal with their own hands and had (it) brought [before me]".

In accordance with the epigraph, the relief depicts two Elamite kings serving a meal to the Assyrian royal couple. The names of the Elamite kings in this epigraph are easily restored based on Ashurbanipal's Prism A x 17–31, which describes the Elamite kings, and among them Ummanaldašu (III) pulling the Assyrian royal vehicle:[39]

> m*Tam-ma-ri-tú* m*Pa-ʾe-e* m*Um-man-al-daš* EGIR *a-ḫa-meš e-pu-šu be-lut* KUR ELAM.MAᵏⁱ *ša ina e-mu-qí* AN.ŠÁR *u* ᵈ15 ENᵐᵉš-*ia ú-šak-ni-šá ina* ᵍⁱšŠUDUN-*ia* m*Ú-a-a-te-eʾ* MAN KUR *A-ri-bi ša ina qí-bit* AN.ŠÁR *u* ᵈ15 BAD$_5$.BAD$_5$-*šú áš-ku-nu* [*ul-tu*] ʳKURˀ-*šú al-qa-*ʳ*áš*ˀ-*šú ana* KUR AN.ŠÁRᵏⁱ *ul-tu ana na-saḫ* ᵘᵈᵘSISKURᵐᵉš *e-lu-u ina* É.MAŠ.MAŠ *šu-bat* EN-*ti-šú-un ma-ḫar* ᵈNIN.LÍL AMA DINGIRᵐᵉš ᵍᵃˡMEŠ *ḫi-ir-tu na-ram-ti* AN.ŠÁR *e-pu-šu* GARZAᵐᵉš É *á-ki-it* ᵍⁱšŠUDUN ᵍⁱš*šá šá-da-di ú-šá-aṣ-bit-su-nu-ti a-di* KA É.KUR *iš-du-du ina* KI.TA-*ia al-bi-in ap-pi at-ta-ʾi-id* DINGIR-*us-su-un*
>
> "Tammaritu, Paʾê (and) Ummanaldaš, who ruled Elam one after the other, with the strength of Aššur and Ištar, my lords, I subdued to my yoke. Uate', king of the land of the Arabs, whom I defeated on order of Aššur and Ištar, I took him (from his land) to Assyria (= the land of god Aššur). Afterwards I ascended Emašmaš, seat of their (the gods' – *N.N.M*) lordship, in order to sacrifice offerings, (and) I performed rites of the *akītu*-house in front of Mullissu, mother of the great gods, beloved spouse of Aššur. I caused them (the defeated kings – *N.N.M.*) to take the yoke of my rickshaw, up to the gates of the temple they pulled (it) below me. I performed supplication, I attended their (my gods' – *N.N.M.*) divinity."

Gilibert is perfectly aware of these two texts, since she quotes them (Gilibert 2018: 297–298). She is also aware of my argument against the identification of the hanging head in the "Garden Scene" as Te'umman's in my article on the Assyrian triumph (May 2012), since she refers to it too (Gilibert 2018: 305). She avoids answering my argumentation directly, however. She ignores the contradiction between the clear statement of the victory and the triumph of 645 BCE as the topic of the reliefs of Room S[1] in its captions and the Assyriological myth that the hanging head in the "Garden Scene" is that of Te'umman. Instead she attempts to harmonize the discrepancy between the epigraph of the "Garden Scene" and the postulated assumption that the hanging head in it is Te'umman's claiming that the "Garden Scene" depicts two triumphs—that of 653 BCE over Te'umman and that of 645 BCE over Ummanaldašu and Tammarītu. This is impossible since Assyrian reliefs, whatever cultural allusions they might contain, never represent two different campaigns or triumphs in the same relief.

Ugly Enemies of Ashurbanipal

Another argument of Gilibert—portrait recognizability of the image of Te'umman—does not hold water either (Gilibert 2018: 294–295). She based this assumption on the research of Paul Collins, who demonstrated that Assyrian reliefs depicted not only ethnic attire of the various peoples, but also attempted at showing distinct facial features (Collins 2006). Among other images, Collins uses the example of Te'umman in his analysis (Collins 2006: 3–6). He, however, points out that the main identificatory criteria remain epigraphs (*ibidem*). He presumes that the hooked nose, the chin, the short beard, and the headdress are Te'umman's "distinctive" features (Collins 2006: 4). But exactly the same features distinct all other Elamites (among them Te'umman's son Tammarītu) from Assyrians in all reliefs where Elamites appear. Collins further considers that Te'umman's eye is represented as injured (Collins 2006: 4–6), although on the relief of the battle at the Ulai river we just see two tightly closed eyelids on the dead face of the severed head. While represented alive, his eyes are shown usual. The eyes of other severed heads are closed too (Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 291). Collins also refers to the head hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" as the head of Te'umman but does not include details of its depiction in his discussion (Collins 2006: 6).

Assyrian reliefs barely reflect individual portrait features. While ethnicity might be established via the dress, beard and hairstyle and some facial features, a concrete personality can only be surely identified due to status signifiers, such as an attire and a headgear and, of course, captions. This is equally true for Te'umman and Ashurbanipal. Each of them respectively have explicitly Elamite and Assyrian beards, hairstyles and clothes, but further identification is only possible through their royal gear and epigraphs. Gilbert is then discussing the ugliness of Te'umman as opposed to the handsomeness of Ashurbanipal. She mistakes "wide ears" and "bright eyes", typical metaphors describing

[39] RINAP 5/1 no. 3 x 17–31. See also RINAP 5/1 no. 23: 99b–100 and no. 60: 6–10.

scribal wisdom,[40] of mastering which Ashurbanipal boasts, for characteristics of the king's physical beauty (Gilibert 2018: 294–295). Handsomeness and physical perfection are features ascribed to all Assyrian kings, not only to Ashurbanipal.[41] Similarly, representing enemies of Ashurbanipal as ugly is not reserved for Te'umman alone, but is typical description of this Assyrian king other adversaries both in visual arts and in writing. Thus, on Ashurbanipal's reliefs Urartians are shown as ugly dwarves and Babylonians, e.g., Samgunu, are depicted ugly too (e.g., Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 301, 306, 312). Obscene texts SAA 3 29–30 defame Bēl-ēṭir of Nippur, "raped captive, doubly so, runny-eyed one, doubly so, squint-eyed man, doubly so,[42]" juxtaposing him with the perfect Assyrian king Ashurbanipal blessed by gods.

The head hanging down the tree cannot be identified due to its facial features as the head of Te'umman or any other person. The eye of the dead head is closed and does not display any injury, notwithstanding that other enemies of Ashurbanipal, for instance the aforementioned Bēl-ēṭir, are said to have eye problems too. The hair is tangled, and no ethnically characteristic hairstyle can be distinguished. The beard seems indeed to be short, but the relief is damaged at this point. Besides, Babylonians—for instance Samgunu—can be shown with short beads too. The facial features of the hanging head are swollen. The nose is exaggeratedly hooked so that it covers the upper lip—much more than the nose of the head of Te'umman on the Ulai river reliefs. It reminds more the noses of the Urarteans and other foreigners on the reliefs of Room XXXIII (e.g., Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 312, 385c).

But more than that, examining new and old photographs of the hanging head makes the discussion above unnecessary.[43] The "Garden Scene" relief is known to be massively restored.[44] The restoration of the relief apparently made the hanging head look like that of Te'umman's on Til-Tuba-battle reliefs (Figure 8a).[45] New photographs of the hanging head (Figure 8b) display differences in details vis-a-vis the photograph published by Barnett (Figure 8c). It is especially obvious

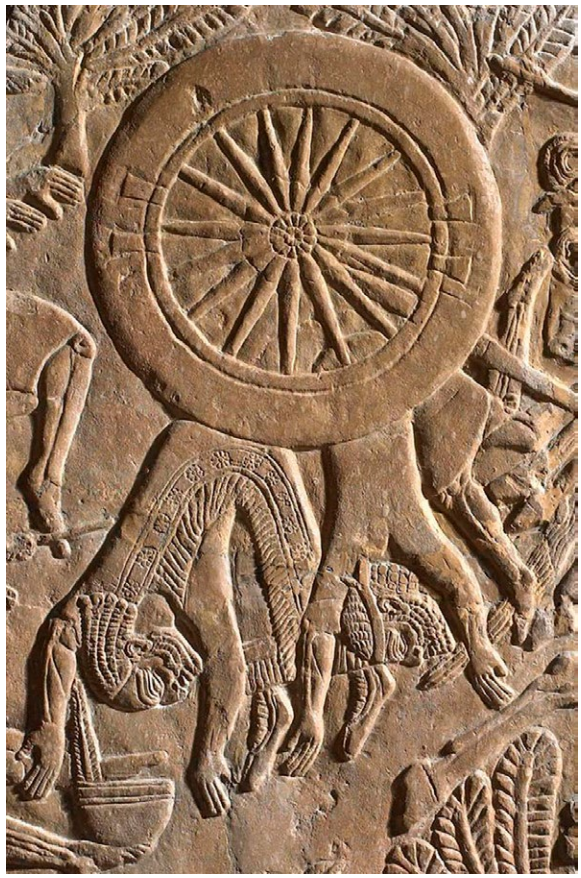

Figure 8a. Bearded Te'umman (battle of the Ulai river). Room XXXIII. South-West Palace. Detail. After Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 291.

in the unusually cursory execution of the curls on the chin of the severed head on the newest images.[46] They are marked as simple diagonal strokes, kind of slashes—there is no parallel for such rendering of beards in all the bulk of NA reliefs! A seam passes accross the "hooked" nose of the head suggesting that its hooked tip might result from a restoration as well. This utterly disposes Gilibert argument that the "Teʾumman's head" that "has distinctive physical features consistently applied every time it is portrayed" is the one depicted in the "Garden Scene." (Gilibert 2018: 294–295). The head hanging from the tree in the "Garden Scene" relief cannot be identified as Te'umman's based upon its facial features. Analysing the cycle of the reliefs in Room S[1] allows us to establish whose head it is.

The Triumph of 645 BCE

If not Te'umman's, whose head is hanging down the tree? Ashurbanipal has decapitated many of his enemies represented as ugly by his artists. But one of these

[40] Well attested in colophons (*passim*).

[41] Ashurbanipal is often called "the perfect image" of various gods. The matter of bodily perfection and beauty of the king is an important element of the Assyrian royal ideology, not limited only to Ashurbanipal. See May 2018: 275–276; and 2020: 187, 231.

[42] SAA 3 30: 1: *ḫi-ib-tú ni-ku a-ki 2-ma maḫ-ḫu a-ki 2-ma bil-ṣu a-ki 2-ˈmaˈ*.

[43] According to my few-months-long correspondence with the British Museum the records of the relief restoration (requested on May 25, 2023) do not describe its details, which was typical until recent (cf. Curtis 2007: 55).

[44] Examination in the BM confirmed by Nancy Highcock in our correspondence proves that many losses are replaced by fillings of different colour.

[45] For the restoration of wishful features on the Assyrian reliefs, see Curtis 2007. J. E. Curtis' study also relies on photographs only and points to the absence of records of restoration made in 1968–1969 (Curtis 2007: 55).

[46] On the old photograph the beard curls are made as squares, although roughly enough. On the new ones there are just strokes on the chin.

Figure 8b. Severed head hanging down the tree in the "Garden Scene". BM 124920. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 8c. Severed head hanging down the tree in the "Garden Scene." Barnett 1975: pl. 171.

enemies is standing out even more than Te'umman and is directly connected with Ashurbanipal's last Elamite wars and with the suppression of the four-years-long uprising of his rebellious brother Šamaš-šumu-ukīn.[47] The remarkable story of this personage, who initially was a vassal of the Assyrian king and then painfully betrayed him and joined Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and the Elamites in their struggle against Assyria, is worth quoting the passage from Ashurbanipal's Prism A that describes this story in full (A vii 16–50; RINAP 5/1 11 vii 38–50):

> *šu-ut* ^{md}AG—EN—MU^{meš} // DUMU DUMU ^{md}AMAR.UTU—A—SUM.NA // *ša ina a-de-ia iḫ-ṭu-ú* // *iṣ-lu-ú* ^{giš}ŠUDUN EN-*ti-ia* // *ša* LUGAL^{meš} KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} // *a-na dan-nu-ti-šú iš-ku-nu* // *it-tak-lu a-na* ^{m}*Um-man-i-gaš* ^{m}*Tam-ma-ri-tú* // ^{m}*In-da-bi-bi* ^{m}*Um-man-al-daš* // LUGAL^{meš} *šá e-pu-šú e-lut* KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} // ^{lú}A KIN-*ia šu-ut še-bul* ^{md}PA—EN—MU^{meš} // *ina ma-le-e lib-ba-a-ti* // *ú-ma-ʾe-er* EDIN ^{m}*Um-man-al-daš* // ^{md}PA—EN—MU^{meš} DUMU DUMU ^{md}AMAR.UTU—A—AŠ // *a-lak* ^{lú}A KIN-*ia šá qé-reb* KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} // *e-ru-bu iš-me-e-ma* // *ik-ku-ud lìb-ba-šú ir-šá-a na-kut-tu* // *na-piš-ta-šú pa-nu-uš-šú ul e-qir-ma* // *iḫ-šu-ḫa mi-tu-tu* // *a-na* ^{lú}*ki-ze-e ra-ma-ni-šú iq-bi-ma* // *um-ma a-si-ban-ni ina* GIŠ.TUKUL // *šu-u* ^{lú}*ki-zu-šú ina* GÍR AN.BAR *šíb-bi-šú-nu*// *up-ta-at-te-ḫu a-ḫa-meš* // ^{m}*Um-man-al-daš ip-làḫ-ma* // ADDA ^{md}PA—EN—MU^{meš} *šu-a-tú* // *ina* MUN *uš-ni-il-ma* // *a-di* SAG.DU ^{lú}*ki-zu-šú* // *ša ú-ra-si-bu-šú ina* ^{giš}TUKUL// *a-na* ^{lú}A KIN-*ia id-din-ma* // *ú-še-bi-la-áš-šú a-di aḫ-ri-ia* // ADDA-*šú a a-din a-na qé-bé-ri* // UGU *šá maḫ-ri mi-tu-us-su ut-tir-ma* // SAG.DU-*su ak-kis ina* GÚ ^{md}PA—ŠU^{II}—*ṣa-bat* // $^{lú.d}$30-*ma-gir* ^{md}GIŠ.NU$_{11}$—MU—GI.NA // ŠEŠ *nak-ri šá it-ti-šú* // *a-na šum-ku-ri* KUR ELAM.MA^{ki} *il-li-ku a-lul*

vii 16–27) "Concerning Nabû-bēl-šumāti, the grandson of Marduk-apla-iddina (II), who had sinned against my treaty (and) cast off the yoke of my lordship, who had made the kings of Elam into his stronghold (and) trusted in Ummanigašu (Ḫumban-nikas II), Tammarītu (II), Indabibi, Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III), kings who had ruled over Elam, I sent my messenger in concern of the extradition

[47] Epigraphs on tablets give some information about the decapitation of Umanigašu II, the puppet king installed by Ashurbanipal in Elam after the defeat of Te'umman in 653 BCE (K 13652 7′–9′; K 4457 + , 11 –17; Fuchs *apud* Borger 1996: 314, no. 66 and 316, no. 72; RINAP 5/2 no. 174: 7′–9′; RINAP 5/2 no. 178: 11–17). But this puppet, who betrayed his overlord, was killed by Tammarītu II around 652 or 651 BCE, and his head seems not to have got further than the Assyrian eunuch (governor?) at Madaktu.

> of Nabû-bēl-šumāti with a message filled with rage to Ummanaldašu.
> vii 28–37) Nabû-bēl-šumāti, the grandson of Marduk-aplu-iddina (II) heard about the coming of my messenger, who arrived in Elam. His heart started pounding, he was frightened. His life became worthless for him, he longed for death. He said to his own groom so: "Cut me down with the weapon!" He and his groom cut each other down with the iron dagger of their belts.
> vii 38–50) Ummanaldašu (Ḫumban-ḫaltaš III) became frightened and put the corpse of Nabû-bēl-šumāti in salt together with the head of the groom, who cut him down with the weapon, gave it to my messenger and caused him to bring (it) to me. I did not burry his body. In order to make him completely dead (lit.—more dead than before), I cut off his head, and hung it on the neck of Nabû-qātī-ṣabat, the *simmagir*-official of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, (my) hostile brother, who had gone with him (Nabû-bēl-šumāti) to make Elam hostile (towards me)".

In Prism A this novella about the death of Nabû-bēl-šumāti is inserted between the report of the sweeping destruction of the Elamite cities by the Assyrians and the surrender of the rival of Ummanaldašu, the other Elamite king Pa'ê, whom Ashurbanipal later harnessed to his royal vehicle together with his competition, Ummanaldašu and Tammarītu.[48]

The servant of Ashurbanipal, the treacherous governor of the Sealand, Nabû-bēl-šumāti, betrayed his overlord, fled to Elam and by guile caught and imprisoned there Assyrians that Ashurbanipal sent to aid him in the war against the rebellious Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. The Assyrian king hated Nabû-bēl-šumāti much more than he hated Te'umman. Unlike the latter—just a rival king, known only from royal inscriptions and reliefs,[49] Nabû-bēl-šumāti was also a subject of a vast correspondence, including letters by the king himself. He is an important protagonist of two literary compositions of Ashurbanipal's scribes (SAA 3 21 and 22, both badly broken). Divinations were performed on his behalf. His extradition was requested a number of times. Ashurbanipal even wrote on this matter to the elders of Elam promising to return them their gods in exchange for Nabû-bēl-šumāti.[50] Royal inscriptions call him the grandson or even "son" of Marduk-aplu-iddina, omitting his true filiation and stressing his descendance from this archenemy of Sargon II and Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal's great grandfather and grandfather. Royal correspondence often vilifies Nabû-bēl-šumāti labelling him the "prostitute of Menānu" and so forth (SAA 21 43: 7–8). Elam and Nabû-bēl-šumāti continued struggling Assyria three more years after the fall of Babylon—from 648 to 645. Furious Ashurbanipal ordered a total destruction of Elam: salt and cress were strewn into its soil to make it barren; important cities and fortresses were captured and ruined; Susa was burnt, its palaces and temples robbed and levelled to ground; statues of its gods, goddesses, and kings were deported to Assyria along with members of the Elamite royal family and nobility; sacred groves were cut down; bones of Elamite kings were thrown out of their tombs in order to make them into "ghosts."[51] Only after the demolition of Elam and personally of Nabû-bēl-šumāti, Ashurbanipal could celebrate the triumph over Babylonia and the victory over his rebellious brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. This was not a regular yearly campaign but a seven-years full-scale war with painful betrayals on personal and state levels. Nabû-bēl-šumāti's role in this war was most prominent. Grant Frame points out: "The importance of Nabû-bēl-šumāti in the rebel coalition is indicated by the fact that Ashurbanipal ranked him with Šamaš-šuma-ukīn and the king of a land whose name is not preserved (likely Elam) as the most prominent rebel leaders" (Frame 1992: 176). In a letter dated to Dûzu 26, 646* Ummanaldašu (III) reported to Ashurbanipal on the capture of Nabû-bēl-šumāti and his dispatch to Assyria.[52]

The triumph over the Babylonian-Elamite coalition was so important that its depiction adorned the south-west wall of the huge throne room of Ashurbanipal's own palace—Room M of the North Palace, while the theme of Te'umman, less central for Ashurbanipal, appeared in the North Palace in Room I, a smaller structure of a *bīt ḫilāni* type and in one of the rooms of the South-West Palace of Sennacherib (Room XXXIII).[53]

[48] In a shorter form this story appears in the summary inscription on slabs from Emašmaš, the temple of Ištar/Mullissu at Nineveh (RINAP 5/1 23 104–107 p. 306, ca. 638). There it is followed by a very short description of the revolt and death of Šamaš-šumu-ukīn. But in this inscription the events are not arranged chronologically.

[49] Te'umman features in two letters by Ashurbanipal. In SAA 21 56 Ashurbanipal boasts that this former Elamite king's wife and sons are now his captives and that Elamite soldiers are killed. In SAA 11 65—a letter demanding the extradition of Nabû-bēl-šumāti—Ashurbanipal reminds the elders of Elam that he spared Elamite cities and temples after the defeat of Te'umman since he has been helping his ally Ummanigaš (II) and threats them with total destruction in case if they do not extradite Nabû-bēl-šumāti. M.W. Waters also points out that some letters that mention "the king of Elam" might mean Te'umman himself (ABL 576; ABL 1114; SAA 21 109 [Assyrian copy of the Babylonian letter of Nabû-bēl-šumāti, then still a loyal vassal]; ABL 328; ABL 268; ABL 831). But all these letters just discuss the political situation with Elam and do not express any hatred. Te'umman was not a personal enemy for Ashurbanipal, and the war against him was just for the sake of putting an Assyrian puppet on the Elamite throne.

[50] See PNA s.v. Nabû-bēl-šumāti 10, Frame 1992: 175-182 and Ito 2018.

[51] This is the most famous iconoclastic text not only for Assyria but for the ancient Near East in general, see May 2010b: 110 and May 2014: 720.

[52] SAA 21 122. The story of the suicide-by-proxy is absent from this letter. The dated letter is remarkable on its own, but this letter of the Elamite king to the Assyrian one is dated by an Assyrian eponym!

[53] The fact that the reliefs of this palace in general and the reliefs of Room XXXIII in particular are better preserved than those of the North Palace, and consequently better understood and studied actually made Te'umman so famous among art historians. The fragmentary

Figure 9. Suicide-by-proxy of Nabû-bēl-šumāti. Room M (the throne room of Ashurbanipal's North Palace) Berlin VA 210. Photograph: © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Vorderasiatisches Museum; photography: Olaf M. Teßmer.

Barnett believed that a relief from Room M preserved the scene of the suicide-by-proxy (Figure 9).[54] This can be Nabû-bēl-šumāti stabbed by his groom. Other relief fragments and drawings of the décor of this room preserve battle scenes, surrender of archers and delivery of an Elamite king, apparently Ummanaldašu (III), through the mountains.[55] But the most important—in the scene of the triumph over Babylonia and Elam in the end of its upper preserved register, behind Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal insignia, in of the row of supplicants brought before Ashurbanipal mounted on his chariot, there are three humble figures, unfortunately not very well preserved (Figure 10). A severed head is hanging from the neck of each of these figures. One of these heads is definitely that of Nabû-bēl-šumāti's hanging down the neck of Nabû-qātī-ṣabat.[56]

reliefs of Room I and Boutcher's drawings, preserved another pictorial version of the battle at the Ulai river, the triumph at Madaktu, the libation over Te'umman's head at Arbela and a surrender of the city with a ziggurat decorated with bulls' heads, probably of Susa.
Not only the throne room itself but the entire throne suite—Room L, adjacent to the south-west wall of Room M and the outer wall of Room L that belonged to the courtyard—was dedicated to Babylonian topics. The north-west wall of Room M was lined with the reliefs depicting the subjugation of Egypt—Ashurbanipal's first campaign that successfully finalized the tremendous undertaking of Esarhaddon, interrupted by the latter's sudden death. This was doubtlessly another most important war of Ashurbanipal.

[54] R.D. Barnett's descriptions of this piece as the "suicide of Chaldaeans" and "two pairs are killing each other" (Barnett 1976: 46) are inaccurate. In fact, we see four Babylonians on this fragment; two in the centre are standing face-to-face and one of them is stabbing the other with a dagger.

[55] His capture and delivery are described in the damaged epigraph of this room (RINAP 5/1 49).

[56] Barnett 1976: pl. 35 slabs 12–13, BM 124945–6. The register below shows the supplication of an Elamite king, most probably Ummanaldašu (III). J. E. Reade (e.g. 1998: 230) thinks it is Tammarītu (II). In this register the severed heads are just piled as are bows in front of them. Barnett identifies this relief as the surrender of Ummanaldašu and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn (Barnett 1976: 46). But this is again an inaccuracy since Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, who did not survive the siege of Babylon and perished in a fire, was already three years dead by the time of the triumph. The caption of this relief lists Šamaš-šumu-ukīn's royal appurtenances (RINAP 5/1 38), depicted delivered to the Assyrian king mounted on his chariot. The man brought before Ashurbanipal is certainly Assyrian. He is not a supplicant. This might be a triumphant general, delivering the booty to the king. The landscape with palm trees suggests that this triumph is taking place in Babylonia. Unfortunately, we do not have a textual description of this triumph. The subject matter of this relief will be discussed in detail elsewhere.

Figure 10. BM 124945–6. The triumph over Babylonia and Elam in Room M (the throne room of Ashurbanipal's North Palace). The row of supplicants is brought before Ashurbanipal with severed heads hanging from their necks. One of them is the head of Nabû-bēl-šumāti hanging down from the neck of Nabû-qātī-ṣabat. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Conclusion

The battle and triumph scenes from Room S[1] in the North Palace at Nineveh relate to the same theme as the decorations of the south-west wall of Ashurbanipal's throne room—the Elamite–Babylonian war of 652–645 BCE. The "Garden Scene" adorns Room S[1], another *bīt ḫilāni* type structure of the North Palace (Figure 1).[57] The enthroned queen in a mural crown and richly decorated garment with a shawl is seated raising a bowl, next to the reclining Ashurbanipal. He is raising a bowl too. The royal couple is celebrating the victory over the unfaithful brother Šamaš-šumu-ukīn, former vassal king of Babylonia, and the traitor Nabû-bēl-šumāti, whose severed head is hanging from the tree and whose body Ummanaldašu, his former ally and host, sent to Assyria in a box of salt. The raised wine bowls of the royal couple denote a libation over the severed head, but this libation is much less public than those over the head of Te'umman at the gates of the Assyrian capitals. The severed head of Nabû-bēl-šumāti is depicted also on the wall of the throne room of the North Palace of Ashurbanipal, hung around the neck of Nabû-qātī-ṣabat, who bore it in the triumphal procession of 645 BCE. That was the public exposure of Nabû-bēl-šumāti's head, while in "the Garden Scene" it is part of the celebration at which only courtiers are present.

The head hanging from the tree in Ashurbanipal's "Garden Scene" cannot be attributed to Te'umman based on the facial similarity, because it was massively restored. Nor can it be Te'umman's, who by the time of these events was

[57] This portico provided another entrance to the palace, probably from the garden, depicted on the walls of this room. For *bīt ḫilānis*, see Reade 2008: 31 specifically for Room S.

already dead for eighth years, just because it would not survive from 653 until 645 BCE especially after multiple exposions in the Middle-Eastern heat. The severed head in the "Garden Scene" is the more recent and well-salted head of the other and much more hated enemy of Ashurbanipal—Nabû-bēl-šumāti. The identification of this head as Nabû-bēl-šumāti's suggests a solution for the overwise unsolvable question of conserving Te'umman's head from 653 until 645, especially since the whole body of Nabû-bēl-šumāti was sent to Assyria in a box of salt.

The epigraph above the nearby slab with a depiction of two Elamite kings bringing food to the banquet participants is alone enough for identifying this scene as the celebration of the victory over Elam in 645 BCE. One of these kings was Tammarītu, who gave refuge and support to Nabû-bēl-šumāti and spoke insolently about the decapitation of Te'umman (e.g., Prism A, RINAP 5/1 no. 11 iv 12b–18). The other is Ummanaldašu that, together with Šamaš-šumu-ukīn and Nabû-bēl-šumāti, tried challenging Ashurbanipal but ended sending Nabû-bēl-šumāti's body to the Assyrian king. The head of their former ally hanging from the tree should have reminded the Elamite kings of their "sins." The entire decorative circle of Room S[1] with the assault of Ḫamānu, surrender of the Elamite king, the royal lion hunt, which terminated with libation over lions' heads, and the libation of the king and the queen over the severed head of Nabû-bēl-šumāti hanging from the nearby tree, represent the triumph and *akītu* of 645 BCE with the libation over the heads of the prey of war and hunt.

Three epigraphs preceding this article present a modest selection of written evidence for the use of skulls for libations by different peoples and in different epochs. Testimonies about the use of enemies' skulls for drinking cups by Scythians and by Gauls (Herodotus VI: 65 and Titus Livius XXIII: 24 respectively) may be added. The phenomenon was, however, universal.[58] Cups made of human skulls are known since the Palaeolithic period. Finds span from Altai to Britain, wherefrom one of the most important and ancient finds derives.[59] Thus Lord Byron's *Lines Inscribed upon a Cup Formed from a Skull* relate to a habit, which existed in his country since time immemorial. But these bowls were made not from the lower part of the skull, as described by M.A. Bulgakov, in *Master and Margarita*, but from the cranial vault. They were not round but oval. Interestingly that in the time of the Ur I dynasty oval metal and stone bowls were rather common.[60] Most of these bowls but not all[61] had lugs for attaching handles.[62] The oval shape of these luxury bowls could derive from the oval shape of bowls made of human skulls and thus the habit of libating with or over a head of an enemy referred to by Ashurbanipal might be indeed very ancient in Mesopotamia too.

Written evidence encompasses all of Eurasia from China to Scandinavia. One of the variants of the *Primary Chronicle* describes the further destiny of the cup made by Pechenegs from the skull of defeated Sviatoslav in more detail: "And this cup is still stored in the treasury of Pecheneg princes (highest authority of Pechenegs — *N.N.M.*). The prince and the princess drink from it when having intercourse in (their) chambers and say: the one whom we will beget will be as the man, whose skull is this. Thus, other skulls as well as this one they inlaid with silver, keep for themselves and drink from them."[63] The description of the Chronicle is strikingly reminiscent of Ashurbanipal and his queen Libbāli-šarrat libating over a severed head of Nabû-bēl-šumāti.

[58] For the most recent overview, see Lushin 2015.
[59] It is dating ca. years 14700 ago. See Bello *et al.* 2011: figs. 4, 8, 9.
[60] Zettler and Horne 1998: 128–129 (nos. 97–98, gold); 130–132 (nos. 99–104, electrum and silver); 153 (no. 123, calcite).
[61] Nos. 100–102 do not have any handles.
[62] In no. 99 such handle is preserved. It is made of wire.
[63] F. IV. 2 1 4: «И есть чаша сия и донине хранима въ казнахъ князей печенѣзкихъ, пиаху же и з нея князи со княгинею въ чертозѣ, егда поимаются, глаголюще сице: каковъ был сий человек, его же лобъ есть, таковъ буди и родившея от насъ. Тако же и прочиихъ вой его лъбы и зоковаша сребромъ и держах у себе, пиюще з нихъ», Lichachev 1996: 447.

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Chapter 24:
Back to life.
On a lifelike female statue head from Assur

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Abstract. As part of the project "Mesopotamian Sculpture in Colour", Astrid Nunn and Heinrich Piening had the opportunity to analyse the famous female head from Assur Closer examination under a microscope revealed that enough of the original painting had been preserved to reconstruct it. For the publication of our monograph, Heinrich Piening made plaster casts which the authors painted with the colours he had determined by spectroscopy. Now we are going a step further. Becca Saladin Segovia has reconstructed this head using artificial intelligence and photo compositing techniques. Yet, our aim is not to copy the ancient head, but to reconstruct what this woman probably looked like.

Keywords: Ancient Mesopotamia, sculpture, Assur, colours, computer–aided lifelike representation.

Introduction

As part of the project "Mesopotamian Sculpture in Colour", Astrid Nunn and Heinrich Piening had the opportunity to analyse the famous female head from Assur.[1] Closer examination under a microscope revealed that enough remains of the original painting had been preserved to reconstruct it. For the publication of our monograph, Heinrich Piening made plaster casts which the authors painted with the colours he had determined by spectroscopy. Now we are going a step further with a lifelike representation. Becca Saladin Segovia immediately agreed to produce this reconstruction. Becca is now known far beyond the borders of her place of work in the USA through numerous reconstructions. These bold colours are all the more effective in her reconstruction. We gladly dedicate this small contribution to Tallay and wish her many more colourful years.

Short description

The head comes from Assur, where it was recovered in the rubble of the Ishtar temple of layer G (Nunn and Piening 2020: 104–106, pl. VII). It is broken off above the neck, the tip of the nose is asymmetrically damaged. The height between the chin and the top of the head is 75 mm, the width 51 mm and the depth 71 mm. The head was sculpted of greyish–beige alabaster, which has a finely polished surface.

Depicted is a female face with elaborate cheekbones, delicately sculpted lips and an oval chin with dimples. The upper and lower edges of the eyelids are modelled, as are the auricles, which are pierced and therefore wore mounted ear jewellery in antiquity. The recesses below the hairscarf show a wavy finish towards the forehead, as well as a centre parting. The hair was thus wavy or frizzy and parted in the middle. The obviously full hair is gathered back, folded into a topknot, and covered with a thin cloth stretched taut.

The dating has long been controversial. In the meantime, however, comparisons with a larger corpus of similar figures suggest a dating to the Ur III period (2110–2003 BCE).

Chromaticity: Colour setting and inlays

On the original fragment, there are sufficient remains of paint to prove that the head was completely painted and to reconstruct the colouring (Figure 1).

By means of UV–VIS absorption spectroscopy, the pigments used were measured and identified on the original.[2] By matching the additional colourimetric data obtained during the UV–VIS measurements with values of reconstruction materials, colour reconstructions with colour deviations of a few nanometres can be achieved. However, due to the system, the brightness value of the reconstructed colour tone as well as

[1] Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, VA 6980.

[2] About the applied UV–Vis technique see Nunn and Piening 2020: 20–24.

Headscarf	Reddish brown ocher	
Skin	Yellowish ocher with Kaoline	
Lips	Red ocher	
	Black	Asphalt
	Editions	
Hair	Blue	Blue paste
Eyes	White	White paste

Figure 1. Analytical results (© Heinrich Piening).

the influence of the binder cannot be determined unambiguously and leads to a scope for interpretation.

Inlays also contribute to the colourfulness (Nunn and Piening 2020: 112–114, 139–140). The hollow eyes, the recesses below the hairscarf for the hair fringe, as well as the eyebrow were provided with inlays that are no longer present. Basically, they consisted of foreign materials, of black or blue stone, white shell or of a synthetic mass. For our little head, it is unclear what kind of inlay material is involved (see below).

Reconstruction

For a reconstruction, some considerations and work steps were needed, which are presented in the following.

As to the head, if we follow today's general rules for the proportions of faces, the distance from the lower edge of the chin to the centre line of the eyebrows is 2/3 of the head's height (Figure 2). In our example, this would be 3.8–4 cm, which would correspond to a head height of about 6 cm. Since the head measures about 7 cm from the lower edge of the chin to the top of the head, it can be assumed that the hair is luxuriant and covered by the scarf.

While the ancient facial proportions correspond to reality, it is no longer true for the proportion between head and body. No contemporaneous female statuette is completely preserved (Thomas 2016). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the ratio of 1:7–7.5 between head and body, which is normal for an averagely proportioned female, did not correspond to the standard of depiction. A standing body in the Ur III period is no more than 4 to 4.5 times larger than the head, which would correspond to a standing height of the figure of 25 to 30 cm. The proportion between the head and the seated body is only slightly smaller. The seated figure would possibly

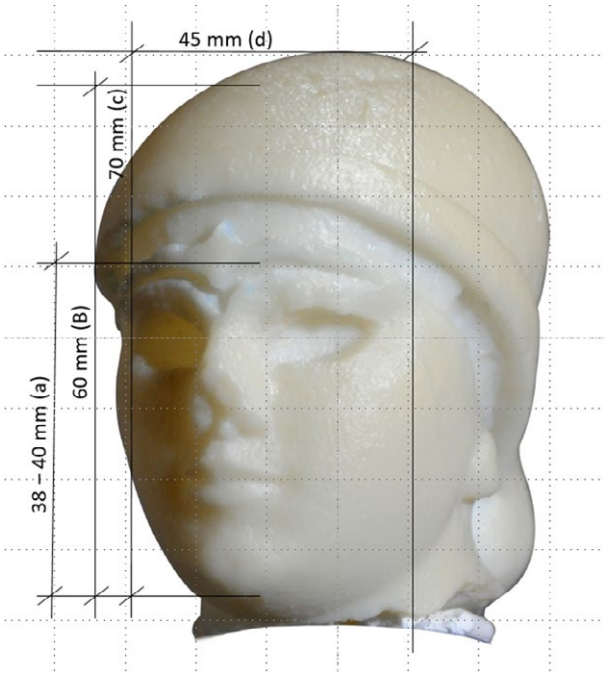

Figure 2. Head with scaling lines. a: Chin to eyebrow; b: Chin to top of the head; c: Total height; d: Face width (© Heinrich Piening).

be 25 cm high.[3] For the interpretation of the depicted woman the posture of the head and the chin part suggest a person standing.[4]

[3] Nunn and Piening 2020: 107, 200. According to the real scales, we would reconstruct a statue height of about 45 cm. The size ratio of a seated to a standing woman is on average about 52% of the body height (https://koerpermass.kan-praxis.de/ [10.06.2021]). So the statuette would be about 28 cm high. An average female face has a length of about 18–20 cm. In relation to the female head, this results in a ratio of 1:3, which suggests that the person depicted was 138–148 cm tall in real life.

[4] Kindly conveyed to us by Margaretha Binapfl, Master Sculptor, Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung.

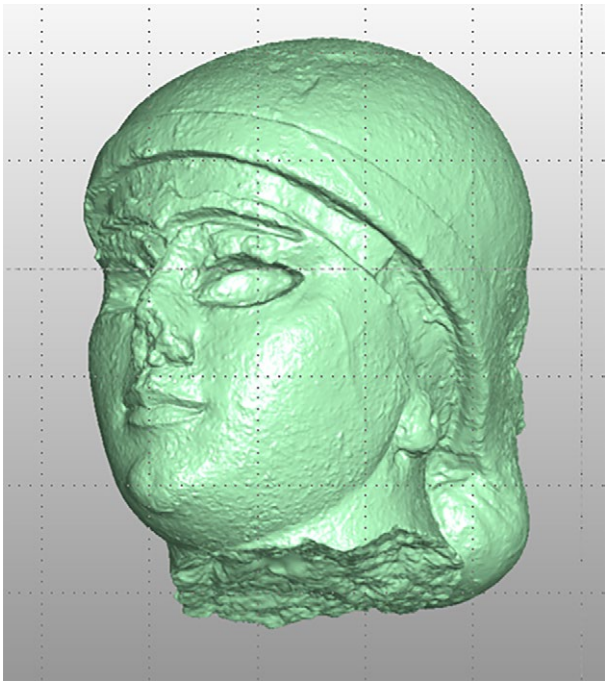

Figure 3. Screenshot (© Heinrich Piening).

In order to avoid damaging or contaminating the original, the Pergamon Museum provided a high-resolution 3D scan (Figure 3), which made it possible to produce a stereo litho copy of the head in original size.[5] The print has a high level of detail. The plotted head was cast in stucco plaster and trimmed in a classic moulding process with a silicone mould and hard shell. These head variants were again classically moulded in several copies (Figure 4).

All further processing steps were carried out on the basis of this copy.

Since the head appears proportionate, some considerations about the original figure will be made here. In a first step, the broken nose was reconstructed sculpturally (Figure 5). The obvious comparison with contemporaneous figures is not possible because of the fragmentary state of the corpus. Accordingly, the reconstruction of the nose is based on the convergence of the lines of the preserved root of the nose, the largely preserved left wing of the nose, and the transition from the upper lip to the base of the nose. This resulted in two slightly different variants, which differ only in the width of the nose.[6]

Ever since the Neolithic, statues have shown recessions that could be inlayed. The eyes are the most common, but also hair, both fringe and eyebrow. Whether recessions were always filled with inlays and not only with bitumen remains uncertain (Nunn and Piening 2020: 139). Part of the good quality of the head is the sharp contours of the recesses, which suggest inserts of a precise design. As a rule, the elements were pressed into the recess with bitumen or tar and glued in place. Occasionally, the excess adhesive material was pressed outwards and resulted in a black border around the inlays that is still visible today (Nunn and Piening 2020: Catalogue 3, 5, 10, 12, 22). In the case of pastes, there was no border.

The original material of the eyes cannot be reconstructed with certainty, and yet there are indications. For if the black material observed in the right eye recess and the right eyebrow is bitumen – there is no analytical finding – then the adhesive is probably bitumen. Bitumen residue suggests the use of fitted inlays of hard material. The eyeball would have been made of a white stone or shell. A black, or eventually a blue stone would have been selected for the pupils. If blue, this stone would have been lapis lazuli. The pupils could also have been painted.

The deepened eyebrows – here as monobrow synophrys (unibrow) – suggest that these were also inlayed. Throughout the ages, the shape of the eyebrow(s) has had connotations, positive or negative.[7] Akkadian physiognomic omina on eyebrows (*šūr īni/īnī*) state that thin (*raqqu*) eyebrows are positive, connected, too dense and bushy ones (*kaṣrū*), however, bring sorrow and unhappiness.[8] Omina always describe possibilities as the basis for a positive or negative statement. In no case do they point to the prevalence of the phenomena described. Thus, one may wonder whether monobrow was the common form of eyebrows in the Ancient Near East. There is much to suggest that the monobrow was merely a technical handle – for simplicity because the eyebrows flow into the root of the nose – and an artistic one – for beauty –, albeit a long-lasting one.

We chose blue as the colour for the eyebrow during the reconstruction. A contemporary head from Larsa proves

[5] Execution Company CREABIS GmbH, München, material PMMA (polymethyl metacrylate).

[6] Margaretha Binapfl and Martin Kutzer, sculptors at the Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung, deserve our sincere thanks for their sensitive reconstruction work.

[7] The monobrow seems to have been generally regarded as the ideal of beauty. A study from Oman shows that synophrys is more widespread there and is probably inherited through the paternal line (Kumar 2017). A comprehensive study from Latin America also comes to similar conclusions (Adhikari, Fontanil, Cal *et al.* 2016). Currently, a monobrow is considered the ideal of beauty in countries like Tajikistan.

[8] My sincere thanks go to Dr Ulrike Steinert, Research Associate, Graduiertenkolleg 1876 „Frühe Konzepte von Mensch und Natur“, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. See Böck 2000: 290 sq. Also Kraus 1936–1937: 222 no. 2: 8–9: *šumma šūr īnīšu ukaṣṣar/uštēmid inazziq/lumun libbi* (ŠÀ.ḪUL) “wenn er seine Augenbrauen (beim Sprechen) zusammenballt/aneinanderstoßen lässt: er wird Kummer erleiden/Herzeleid”.

Figure 4. From original to 3D copy. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Vorderasiatisches Museum. Photo: Olaf Teßmer (© Heinrich Piening).

Figure 5. From 3D copy to reconstruction (© Heinrich Piening).

that blue eyebrows existed (Nunn and Piening 2020: 154, fig. 491). In the original, this blue may have been a paste as on the head from Larsa. However, because of the possible bitumen residues and the extraordinarily precise finish, we tend towards stone. This could have been lapis lazuli.

Normally, lapis lazuli came to the Mesopotamian centres from Afghanistan. This very hard stone can largely only be worked by grinding, which, however, requires a refined artistry for the filigree shapes of the recesses in the alabaster. The stone can only be worked outside its support, since the water used in wet cutting might have damaged the alabaster.

The material used for our reconstruction is a commercially available modelling dough.[9] As it is available in a variety of shades, a lapis lazuli blue was chosen for the hair and eyebrows. The eyeball was reconstructed in a white dough.

The detectable pigments allow a complete colour reconstruction of the head. The pigments are different iron oxides (ochre earths). These are extremely stable to ageing and light, so that a colour assignment of the detected pigments to natural ochre earths is possible by means of colourimetric comparisons (see note 2). However, a statement regarding the degree of brightness of the colour tones (skin tones) remains imprecise, as the measurement method used allows for blurring here. Likewise, the influence of the binder on the colour depth cannot be clearly defined, as this is determined by the ratio of the refractive indices of pigment and binder.[10] So far, there are no reliable statements about the binders used for colour settings from the time when the head was created (Nunn and Piening 2020: 38–39). However, since the choice of natural, weather-stable binders is limited, a mixture of egg and casein was used for the reconstruction,[11] analogous to proven binders of

[9] FIMO is a modelling dough from the Company STAEDLER Mars GmbH und CO KG, Nurnberg.

[10] Low refractive indices, as found in proteins or gums, produce lighter shades than high refractive indices, such as linseed oil.

[11] A mixture of whipped whole chicken egg and casein from low–fat quark or ready–made casein from the Company Schminke was used.

Figure 6. Different interpretations (© Heinrich Piening).

Egyptian and Greek versions from pre–Christian times (e.g. Stege, Fiedler and Baumer 2010: 227).

Pieces of natural ochre from the Kremer Pigmente (Aichstetten) range were prepared as base pigments. In order to obtain paintable colours that can be applied with a brush, the pigments were rubbed with a glass runner (analogous to a rubbing stone), filled into glass vessels for storage and applied with a brush.[12] The different binder requirements of the pigments must be taken into account here. This depends on the grain shape and grain size and can vary greatly. Too little binding leads to "chalking" of the setting and rapid loss of the setting. Since stucco, unlike alabaster, strongly absorbs water, a blocking primer with diluted binder is necessary. The paint was applied in two to three coats to obtain a full covering. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make any statements about colour modification by highlighting, since the original layers of paint have hardly been preserved. However, if we look at colour versions from Egypt that were made close in time to our example, the composition of the version there is largely two–dimensional, without any technical painting enhancements.

In the course of a study exercise with archaeology students as well as restorers, who all had access to the same painting media but had different application skills, astonishing colour variations occurred (Figure 6).

Asphalt varnish was used for black areas as well as for the inlays.[13]

We also tested natural textile dyeing with products that are historically documented or available in the Near East. We used traditional plants that originated in eastern Turkey and Iran. It turned out that the resulting colours on textiles are very similar to the proven colour representations on the examined sculptures – in the case of the head, the colour of the headscarf. This overlap allows to consider our measured colours as the reproduction of the original garment colours (Figure 7).

Excursus: Seeing blue

No material has a colour. Materials absorb the property from the range of the electromagnetic spectrum visible to us (white light) due to different physical mechanisms. The remaining, reflected light hits our retina in the form of photons and creates a stimulus there that is interpreted as colour by different areas of our brain. Humans see trichromatically, which means they have three colour receptors for red, green and blue (cones). These are unevenly distributed on the retina and have different sensitivities. These cones contain visual pigments that are decomposed by the incident light and converted into electrical signals and processed further. The used visual pigment is mostly replaced or converted back afterwards, but this can take place with a delay.

[12] About fibre bundles and brushes, Nunn and Piening 2020: 41.

[13] Asphalt varnish in balsamic turpentine oil, Company Kremer Pigmente, Aichstetten (Asphalt is here synonymous with bitumen).

Figure 7. Results of textile dyeing based on antique recipes (© Heinrich Piening).

In the process of colour perception and to enhance contrast, the brain sets off the signal input for red and green against each other, which leads to a changed colour interpretation. With regard to blue, the brain uses the blue signal input to also determine brightness (and not just the colour), so that when a blue surface is viewed for a longer period of time and the visual pigment in the human photoreceptor cells has been used up, the blue colour appears blue–black. Since the proportion of human visual cells for blue is only about 9%, the state of exhaustion is reached relatively quickly. This explains the strikingly "unclean" separation between black and blue for us. In Mesopotamia, the mental and linguistic correlation between material and colour is still very strong. On statues, hair and beards made of a shiny, oily black substance and possibly a shimmering blue pigment reminiscent of lapis lazuli embodied the resplendent radiance required of an effigy. This explains why hair and beard or pupils – that appear black to us – are rendered in lapis lazuli and compared with it in the texts – even while it appears to us as blue to dark blue stone (Thavapalan, in Nunn and Piening 2020: 197; Nunn and Piening 2020: 203–204).

There is thought and discussion, that early cultures could not perceive blue because they did not name blue. Recent genetic studies show, however, that trichromatic vision was developed before people became sedentary (Sharpe, Stockan, Jägle, Nathans 1999). How colours are seen, named and classified is subjective and varies greatly from one culture to another (Deutscher 2020: 51–115).

Virtual reconstruction

For several years now, Becca Saladin Segovia has been using her brand, Royalty Now, to create digital reconstructions that show how historical figures might have looked during their lifetime[14] (Figures 8–9).

The process began with Dr. Piening's team providing reference materials, and a historically–accurate headdress was created and modeled. It was then sent to Becca as a photo reference to make sure the headdress was as accurate as possible. The next step was determining which thinkable skin shade to use, and the consensus was to find a sort of average and to use one of the skin tones in the middle of the range.

Becca began by creating an artificial intelligence approximation of the image, and then continued in Photoshop. Several photos were composited into the portrait image to create a more detailed and lifelike appearance, including skin and hair texture. The digital reconstruction was constantly compared to the original to make sure every proportion and feature matched the structure exactly. The headscarf reference image

[14] https://www.royaltynowstudios.com/

Figure 8. Digital reconstruction (© Becca Saladin Segovia, Royalty Now).

Figure 9. Back to life (© Becca Saladin Segovia, Royalty Now).

was then composited onto the portrait, and a period-appropriate earring added.[15]

Conclusion

Nevertheless, this rendering is not a one-to-one transposition of the head. The face is a little broader. We have opted for a light monobrow, which is brown like the hair fringe and the eyes. The covered hair and bun suggest, that the person depicted represents a lady from royal circles rather than a priestess (Nunn and Piening 2020: 105).

The fact that she is probably in her mid-20s appears all the better on this reconstruction. With their newly discovered colours, these statues spring to life again. It is important for us to move away from our achromatic vision in the environment of the ancient Near Eastern cultures. For, whether individuals could afford objects of art or only simpler objects, (almost) all were resplendent in shiny and warm colours.

With a lifelike representation, ancient life becomes more tangible for us, even if neither colours nor the modelling may be correct in all details. This further step brings us closer to the people of ancient Mesopotamia.

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[15] Musche 1992: pl. XLIII. This shape was very common beyond the Ur III period.

Chapter 25:
On goats, mountains and the elusive Babylonian royal seal

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"L'animal [...] est la référence symbolique par excellence,
le lieu obligé de tous les systèmes symboliques."
(Pastoureau 1989: 85).

Abstract. Despite the political and symbolic importance of royal seals, and the frequent references to them in the contemporary documents, there is hardly any material evidence of their existence in Babylon. The only example of a royal glyptic, dating from the reign of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, is actually a modeled relief on a tablet imitating a seal impression. But if its manufacture is surprising, the scene represented is even more so: it depicts the king of Babylon, armed with a sickle sword, fighting a wild goat. The present article analyses the implications of the iconographic motif and its symbolic connotations with the aim of improving our understanding of Babylonian royal ideology during the first millennium BCE.

Keywords: Babylonian royal ideology, royal seals, combat scene, animal imagery, wild goat, mountains.

Seals[1] were key instruments in the administrative practices in ancient Mesopotamia, both in economic and political institutions and in the private sphere. From the point of view of praxis, the use and functions of royal seals, understood here as the private seals of the ruling monarch,[2] did not differ much from other kinds.[3] However, the royal seal was first and foremost a symbol and an expression of royal authority and identity, and it was strongly associated with political power and control.

In a passage of the historical-literary composition known as "The Nabopolassar Epic" (BM 34793),[4] we find a reference to what seems to be the coronation ceremony[5] of Nabopolassar of Babylon (626–605).[6] Described on the reverse(?)[7] of the tablet – after a passage referring to a fight between Assyrians and Babylonians in Cutha and the defeat of the Assyrian eunuch Sîn-šum-līšir (626) on the obverse(?) – the ceremony takes place in a *kummu,* maybe a cella in the Esagil temple of Marduk[8] in the city of Babylon, where the "princes of the land are assembled, [*they bless*] Nab[opolassar . . .]" (iii 3)[9] and they bestow on the king the royal seal: "They took the royal seal [(. . .)]" (iii 12)[10] as one of the symbolic elements of sovereignty and royal power, together with the crown and the ruler's staff (iii 7, 13).

Another example of the symbolism and authority associated with these items of regalia can be found in

[1] Among the many topics studied and contributions made in her long and fruitful career, art historian Tallay Ornan has dealt with visual representations of political images in the Ancient Near East, and she has extensively analysed cylinder seals. In her seminal work *The Triumph of the Symbol: Pictorial Representation of Deities in Mesopotamia and the Biblical Image Ban* (2005), she examined some of the archaeological materials that appear in this article. Therefore, it is an honor and also a pleasure to dedicate to her some observations reassessing the figurative language of royal seals in first-millennium BCE Babylonia and Assyria. I would like to express my gratitude to Laura Battini and Benjamin Sass for inviting me to participate in this commemorative volume. The research for this article was carried out within the framework of the Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe 2615 "Rethinking Oriental Despotism" at the Free University of Berlin in the autumn of 2021 and in the summer of 2022 and I would like to thank Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum and Jörg Klinger for the kind invitation to participate as a Fellow in the group, and for their warm welcome. Special thanks are due to Ismail Bekiroglu for his kind assistance with the bibliography in Berlin and to Chikako Watanabe for providing the photos of figures 1 and 2. I would also like to acknowledge the feedback and assistance provided by Simon Davis, Elena Devecchi, Jordi Nadal and specially Jamie Novotny. I alone am responsible for any errors or shortcomings. Web pages were last visited in April 2023.

[2] I do not understand *sensu stricto* the bureau seals in use by the palace administration as "royal seals"; these were tools of the delegation of power from the monarch to his officials, even though they represent the authority invested in the officials by the king (Radner 2008).

[3] See Paulus 2012: 357.

[4] Text edition and commentary in Grayson 1975: 78–86; Da Riva 2017: 82–88; see also LBPL no. 26834 (https://lbplproject.com/).

[5] There are no other texts from Babylonia describing a coronation ritual, but we have evidence from other Ancient Near Eastern periods and cultures (summarized in Da Riva 2017: 85–86).

[6] All dates in this article, apart from those in bibliographical references, are BCE.

[7] The fragmentary state of the tablet makes it difficult to decide which side is the obverse and which side the reverse. The historical and political implications of this problem are clear: was the Assyrian chief eunuch first defeated in Cutha, and Nabopolassar then officially crowned in Babylon, or did the coronation take place before the clashes in Cutha? Considering the available documentation (Beaulieu 1997; Reade 1998), for the moment this question remains open.

[8] Or a room in the king's palace. Compare the usage in Nebuchadnezzar II for the North palace: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ribo/babylon7/akk?xis=akk.r000f06

[9] BM 34793 iii 3: [*p*]*aḫ-ru-ú rubû*(lú^{meš}nun) ˹šá¹ *māti*(kur) ^{md}*na*[*bû*(a[g)-*aplu-uṣur* x x x]

[10] BM 34793 iii 12: *il-qu-ú kunuk*(^{na4}kišib) *šarrūtu* (lugal-*ú-tú*) [(x)]

Figure 1. Relief in the North Palace of Nineveh, Room M, representing Assyrian soldiers holding Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's regalia. From Novotny and Watanabe 2008: 107 fig. 4.

the Assurbanipal relief from the North Palace of Nineveh (668–ca. 631; BM 124945–6), currently on display at the British Museum.[11] Here, the Assyrian king receives the war spoils from Babylon after the capture of the city in 648. Interestingly, the parade of war booty starts with the seal, the crown and the staff of his defeated brother Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (668–648): these were the three most important material elements that convey the concept of kingship in the first millennium (Figures 1–2).

Despite these examples of the importance of royal seals as symbols of power in the procedures of the state administration, and despite the frequent references in contemporary cuneiform sources to their use (Paulus 2012; Jursa 2014: 101–102, 107; Levavi 2018: 172, 220, 224), there is so far no archaeological evidence of a royal seal in first-millennium Babylonia.[12] Not only have no objects been found, but in fact not even an impression of a seal has been documented so far.[13] The only "exception" is the seal of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn.

The seal of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn

The seal pseudo-impression, or pseudo-seal, of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is modeled on both obverse and reverse of BM 77611+ BM 77612, a clay tablet from Babylon (Figure 3). The text refers to the tablet as "sealed with a royal seal that has no e[qual (and allows no modifications)" (rev. 4' ^{na_4}kišib lugal-*ú*-<<TU>>-*ti-šú šá la tam*-[*ši-li (u lā paqāri iknukma*) (...)],[14] suggesting that this was indeed Šamaš-

[11] Barnett (1976: 46–47, pl. XXXV); see also https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1856-0909-34_1 and Novotny and Watanabe 2008: 106, fig. 1. A detailed study of the relief and the textual sources presumably consulted by the artists who carved the monument can be found in Novotny and Watanabe 2008; some of the texts make express reference to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's seal. For the relief and its significance, see also Zaia 2019a: 42–43.

[12] For evidence on royal seals, see Otto 2013. Both Ornan (2005: 70–71) and Otto (2013: 66 no. 106) refer to the seal in the Iraq Museum IM 67920 as being a seal of Marduk-apla-iddina (II). The seal's inscription does mention the name of the king, but it is in fact a dedication of the king to an unnamed deity, maybe Marduk: "To his lord, Marduk-apla-iddina, descendant of Jakin, has presented (this)." According to Collon (2003: 10*–12*, fig. 1), the style of the seal is a Babylonian version of the Assyrian "Royal Seal Type", in which the king is depicted fighting a lion. See also Collon 2005: 80–81, no. 369; Leick 2007: 113, 115, fig. 7.27. Another similar example is the seal from the Mossène Foroughi collection with a dedicatory inscription to Nabû and a later dedication naming "Erība-Marduk, the king" perhaps added by his grandson Marduk-apla-iddina (Porada 1993: 578–81, fig. 46; Collon 2003: 12*–13*, fig. 2; see also Leick 2007: 115, fig. 7.28.). Neither example can be considered a royal seal.

[13] By contrast, there is plenty of evidence from Assyria: several Assurbanipal seal impressions (RINAP 5/1: 360–262, Asb. 65–67); the Sennacherib Seal of Destiny (RINAP 3/2: no. 212); and the tablet copy of the seal of Šagarakti-Šuriaš that also has texts of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Sennacherib on it (RINAP 3/2: no. 156). I owe these references to Jamie Novotny.

[14] For similar formulae, see Paulus 2012: 364 fn. 46.

Figure 2. Relief in the North Palace of Nineveh, Room M, representing an Assyrian soldier holding Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's seal. From Novotny and Watanabe 2008: 116 fig. 15.

šuma-ukīn's official seal (Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 167).[15]

BM 77611+ was published by Eckart Frahm and myself more than twenty years ago (Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000), when we presented the edition of the text with a detailed examination of its historical and religious context. BM 77611+ deals with the endowment of a prebend and with ceremonies carried out in the temple of Bēlet-Ninua in Babylon. In that publication we also presented a copy of the tablet, and a thorough study and a drawing of the seal impression, but we did not go much further in the interpretation of the scene depicted (Figure 4), beyond identifying (with the kind help of the late Angela von den Driesch) the animal represented in the fight with the Babylonian king as a wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*).[16]

The scene represented, an animal contest motif,[17] is reminiscent of the Neo-Assyrian depictions of the king as lion-killer in royal seals and reliefs (Radner 2008: 487, fig. 3).[18] In this case, however, the king (Šamaš-šuma-ukīn) is fighting a wild goat.[19] The trope of animal combat is often encountered in representations of royal seals in the third millennium (Otto 2013: 50–53), but in the second millennium it was less popular; there are certain exceptions in a handful of seals from Mittanian, Assyrian and Ugarit kings (Otto 2013: 57, nos. 82, 83, 86). The animal combat appears again in first-millennium Assyrian royal glyptic in which the king appears killing a lion with a dagger.[20] In any case, the limited number of exemplars we have does not allow us to draw definitive conclusions regarding the popularity of this motif among this type of seal.

[15] However, even this case is dubious, for it is in fact not the impression of a royal seal, but a modeled reproduction on clay of the supposed original(?) seal impression; so, in spite of the statement written on the tablet, it is uncertain that this is a representation of a royal seal at all. For the seal impression see also Collon 2005: 129–130, no. 555 and Otto 2013: 66, no. 105.

[16] This identification has recently been confirmed, in a personal communication (13/09/2021), by Simon Davis on the basis of the photos and drawings of the image: "... *Capra aegagrus* ... is still found in parts of the Near East. Given the size of its horns it must have been an adult male. It cannot be a gazelle as gazelles have shorter horns with a more accentuated curvature. It cannot be a sheep as their horns are also shorter as well as thicker at the base. As for its being a species of antelope, well I am unsure here, but I doubt. There were once Hartebeest in the Near East (at least in Israel) but their horns are quite different."

[17] A favourite motif in Ancient Near Eastern royal glyptic, as demonstrated by Otto 2013: 48, 50–51.

[18] The same scene appears in the reliefs of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562) in Brisa and probably also in Wadi as-Saba in present-day Lebanon (Da Riva 2014, 2015).

[19] The question of whether this motif was exclusive to Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, or other Babylonian kings had similar seals, has to remain open, for we have no other royal seals from first-millennium Babylonia.

[20] For the lion as symbol, see Watanabe 2002 and 2021.

Figure 3. BM 77611+ (Credits: Zunkir, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Confirmation_of_land_grant_by_Shamash-shum-ukim_-_BM_77611-2.jpg).

Figure 4. Detail of the pseudo seal impression (Credits: Ramón Álvarez Arza)

Interpretation

Because royal seals were symbols of sovereignty and domination, the iconographic representations they bear are also a manifestation of the political ideology. When considering the scene depicted on the seal impression of Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's tablet, one may wonder first about the particular symbolism of the wild goat that makes it a worthy opponent of the Babylonian king, and second about the relation of this particular representation with that of the Assyrian king in the office seals fighting a lion. It has always been assumed that Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's seal *imitates* the Neo-Assyrian ones, and that this reproduction is an ostensible adaptation and modification of Assyrian motifs in a Babylonian context. After all, the Babylonian king was of Assyrian origin.[21] And while the king's robes and crown are Babylonian,[22] the image is nevertheless an

[21] Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 169; Ornan 2005: 71; Paulus 2012: 364 fn. 46; Da Riva 2014: 108; Zaia 2019b: 10–11.

[22] The king is depicted dressed in the characteristic Babylonian royal garments, a long robe with a sleeveless coat with a fringe, and the Babylonian crown – a conical pointed cap with a long tassel hanging down at the back. This type of crown is found in many representations of first-millennium monarchs, and also in the Assurbanipal relief in

imitation of Assyrian iconography, a modification of Assyrian tropes. Even if this argument is sound, there are some aspects that deserve a reexamination and a nuanced explanation.

The weapon

In the first place, Šamaš-šuma-ukīn is not subduing the animal with a dagger, the weapon used by the Neo-Assyrian kings to kill lions, but with a sickle sword or scimitar. Sickle swords, like the Middle Assyrian one from the Metropolitan Museum of New York shown here (Figure 5)[23] often appear represented in the hands of kings and gods in the context of combat scenes, as they were considered symbols of royal power. The sickle sword was a ceremonial weapon, in contrast to the more "secular" dagger used by the Neo-Assyrian kings when killing lions in the seal representations, but it is difficult to say whether the selection of the weapon had any implications for the religious or symbolic nature of the scene represented in particular, or of the Babylonian kingship in this period in general (see Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 169 fn. 69). In first-millennium seals from Babylonia with the motif of an animal contest, several divine and human male figures are depicted subduing mythical creatures or real animals (lions, griffins, or sphinxes) with a sickle sword (Collon 2005: 81, seals nos. 366–371; 196: no. 965), and the motif in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's pseudo-seal seems to follow the pattern of these representations. However, as most of these seals lack a secured archaeological context, it is questionable whether the tropes of these Babylonian seals are a derivation or adaptation from contemporary Assyrian motifs (after all, Babylonia was under Assyrian domination for many years during the late Neo-Assyrian period), or are a local development.[24] In any case, as none of the impressions mentioned above belong to a royal seal, it is uncertain whether the contest motif was widespread among Babylonian seals of court officials, like IM 67920 (Collon 2005: 81 no. 369).

Figure 5. Sickle Sword (Credits: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/322443)

The animal

But the element that makes the BM 77611+ pseudo-seal stand out among both the Assyrian and the Babylonian seal impressions referred to above is the animal represented with the king. It is not a lion as in the Assyrian glyptic, and nor is it a mythical animal, like the one depicted in some Babylonian representations of the combat scene, but a wild goat. Horned caprids of different sizes and types are often represented in Middle Babylonian seals,[25] but not in direct relation with the king. However, as we already noted in the publication of BM 77611+ (Da Riva and Frahm 1999/2000: 168), there is a Kassite seal from the Louvre (AO 4793),[26] decorated with two crossing caprids as well as with the symbols of the gods Marduk and Nabû, which bears the legend "sealed document of the king's instructions". Although no king is named, Paulus considers this object to be a dynastic royal seal (Paulus 2012: 360, 366–367).

Thus, already in the second millennium animal combat scenes in seals appear not only in the Assyrian tradition, but in the Babylonian one as well linked to the sickle sword as a real or symbolic weapon. In addition, in Kassite seals, caprids are often represented in official royal glyptic. The combined evidence of the scene in AO 4793 with the Babylonian tradition of combat scenes allows a re-evaluation of the figurative motif in Šamaš-šuma-ukīn's seal from BM 77611+ and of the symbolic role of the wild goat for the Babylonian monarchy.

which the war spoils from Babylon are brought in the presence of the king and one of the Assyrians carries the crown in his hands (Novotny and Watanabe 2008: 112–113). This royal attire differs from that of the Assyrians, as is clearly seen from a comparison with the pair of steles of Assurbanipal (BM 90865) and Šamaš-šum-ukīn (BM 90866) from the temple of Nabû in Borsippa, now in the British Museum (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1880-0617-3).

[23] This bronze sickle sword from the Metropolitan Museum of Art is from the reign of Adad-nārārī I (1305–1274): https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/322443

[24] The image of the heroic monarch defeating wild animals, and putting his life at risk to fight chaos and to ensure the prosperity of his people, was a central trope in Near Eastern royal ideology. In fact, during the middle of the second Millennium, the motif of the animal hunt developed as a "metaphor for the king's obligation to defeat and control the disruptive elements encroaching upon the civilized order of the state" (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 244).

[25] I thank Elena Devecchi for this reference, and for sharing her knowledge of Kassite seals with me.

[26] https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010165590

Figure 6. *Capra aegagrus* (Credits: Alexander Malkhasyan – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=90770262)

In the Ancient Near East, goats, both wild and domesticated, are often referred to in the texts, and found in faunal assemblages of archaeological sites and in the iconography.[27] The wild goat (Figure 6) is a regular feature of the bestiary in many cultures. It is gregarious and at the same time constantly in motion, so it is elusive to humans; goats have to be pursued, hunted, fought and defeated. With its elegant bounds and leaps, its agility and intelligence, the wild goat defies human physical limitations. From a Babylonian perspective, these magnificent and powerful animals were the masters of the impregnable mountains, remote and exotic places inhabited by primitive creatures. When Babylonian kings ventured forth into the mountains, they must have wondered at the wild goats' mastery of the terrain and their command of the heights.[28] In addition, because of their social organization, with a hierarchically dominant male at the head, struggles for power are fierce among goats; so it is not surprising to find this animal as an emblem of strength, might and royalty.

But for all the figurative overtones and the predominant place of wild goats in Babylonian royal iconography (seals), there are no references to these animals in the first-millennium Babylonian inscriptions.[29] These texts focus mainly on building projects and religious offerings and do not include the lengthy and detailed descriptions of royal military exploits so often found in the Assyrian documentation; and this accounts for the lack of references to wild animals in these documents. By contrast, in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, which focus more on territorial conquest and offensives of the armies commanded by the king, wild goats are often mentioned, for they not only embody the spirit of the highlands crossed by the Assyrian monarchs in the course of the campaigns, but also personify the hardships and challenges encountered in such

[27] For an overview of animals in the Ancient Near East, see Collins 2002; Recht and Tsouparopoulou 2021.

[28] For wild goats in the natural environment, see Alzieu and Canet 2021.

[29] Domestic goats appear frequently in the texts, but usually as sacrificial offerings, alongside others presented to the gods. For goats in Neo-Babylonian temple contexts, see van Driel 1993; Kozuh 2006 and 2010.

demanding terrains. Thus, in the descriptions of the difficulties encountered by the marching battalions in the highlands, goats, the most skilled animals in negotiating the arduous terrain, are used as a simile of the resolute and daring Assyrian king. Thus, for example, in Sennacherib 17 iv 25–35: "Like a fierce wild bull, with my select bodyguard and my merciless combat troops, I took the lead of them (the soldiers in my camp). I proceeded through the gorges of the streams, the outflows of the mountains, (and) rugged slopes in (my) chair (iv 30). Where it was too difficult for (my) chair, I leapt forward on my (own) two feet like a mountain goat. I ascended the highest peaks against them. Where my knees became tired, I sat down upon the mountain rock and drank cold water from a water skin to (quench) my thirst."[30]

The mountain

Although wild goats are not mentioned in the Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, the highlands they inhabit appear in a variety of contexts with multifaceted connotations. [31]

Firstly, mountains are mentioned as real places, usually remote and located at the margins of the known world, in liminal regions that are incorporated into the imperial territory after military conquests. In passages in which campaigns are mentioned, mountains are referred to in connection with the effort required to negotiate the terrain. An example can be found in the East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, which celebrates the construction of the royal palace:

> "Through his (Marduk's) exalted support, I repeatedly travelled (through) far-off lands, remote mountains, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, difficult paths, obstructed roads, where access was blocked (and) approach was not possible, difficult road(s), (and) thirty path(s), and killed unsubmissive, bound enemies, put the land in order, and made the people prosper. I drove away the criminals and villains from the people" (Nebuchadnezzar II 2 ii 12–29).

Similar statements appear in the Brisa inscriptions. Carved on a rock in a mountain context, these monuments are a rare example in the corpus of Nebuchadnezzar's texts, as the references to the military operations in Lebanon are unusually profuse:

> "Under their (the gods') aegis I travelled safely in distant lands, remote paths, places where nobody had trodden before, difficult roads, paths of thirst, faraway districts of strenuous paths." (WBA iii 10–18, Da Riva 2012: 43f.).

Secondly, mountains are also charged with allegorical meanings, positive as well as negative, real but also illusory (Ponchia 2004; Feldt 2015). They were "alien places that played (...) a central role in the imaginative and symbolic universe of lowland Mesopotamians" (Michalowski 2010: 153). In the tablet known as "Babylonian Map of the World" (an unprecedented creation that represents the whole earth from a Babylo-centric point of view),[32] seas and highlands surround the land and construct the space, organizing the regions within it (Figure 7). As boundaries of the civilized world, mountains were places where kings from the Akkadian times onwards had inscribed their military exploits on rock surfaces for posterity (Michalowski 2010; Da Riva 2018: 20). In the Babylonian worldview, mountains are located in remote, uncharted territories, on the margins of the world.[33] Therefore, subjugating lands and kings from the faraway highlands signified controlling the entire universe:

> "I mustered the widespread people whom the god Marduk, my lord, had entrusted to me (and) whom the hero, the god Šamaš, had given me to shepherd, all lands everywhere (and) every single inhabited settlement from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, far-off lands, the widespread people of the inhabited world, kings of remote mountains and distant *islands* that are in the Upper and Lower Seas, whose lead-rope(s) the god Marduk, my lord, placed in my hand to pull his chariot pole, and I imposed corvée-duty on the workmen of the gods Šamaš and Marduk to build Etemenanki" (Nebuchadnezzar II 27 ii 19–44).

And the most fitting image of the conquering hero is the king commanding his troops across the mountains:

> "O Marduk, the Enlil of the gods, the one who directs the (four) quarters (of the world), look with pleasure upon my good deeds and, by your exalt[ed] command, [give to me a]s a gift to [my] royal majesty a just scepter, a firmly-founded throne, a dynasty (lasting) until the distant future, (and) the ability to ma[rch] through the four quarters (of the world), on high (mountain) peaks." (Nabopolassar 4 ii 14–22).

[30] For further examples (Sennacherib 16 v 1–3; 22 iv 5–6; 23 iv 1–2; 46 40; 222 39b–41), see http://oracc.org/rinap/rinap3/corpus/

[31] A selection of texts is offered here, but more evidence can be found in: http://oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/corpus/

[32] For the map, see Horowitz 1998; Raaflaub and Talbert 2009; Michalowski 2010; Zaccagnini 2012.

[33] From the Assyrians' point of view, mountains were often inaccessible places where their foes fled to (I owe this remark to Jamie Novotny).

Figure 7. Babylonian Map of the World. (Credits: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonische_Weltkarte#/media/Datei:Baylonianmaps.JPG)

In addition, by virtue of their height, mountains were also a metaphor of monumental buildings. Palaces, ziggurats and city walls are compared to mountains, as in this passage in a cylinder inscription from Babylon dated to the reign of Nabopolassar :

> "At that time, Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, the one who pleases the heart(s) of the gods Nabû and Marduk, I: (As for) Imgur-Enlil — the great wall of Babylon, the original boundary marker which has been manifest since the distant past, the firmly-founded ground plan that has endured for all eternity, the high mountain that rivals the heavens, the strong shield that bolts the entrance to the land of enemies, the wide courtyard of the Igīgū gods, the broad forecourt of the Anunnakū gods, the stairway to the heavens, the ladder to the netherworld, the station(s) of the gods Lugal-girra and Meslamta'e, the cult niche of the goddess Ištar — the great queen – the site of the bow of the god Dagān — the warrior — the camp enclosure of warrior – the god Ninurta " (Nabopolassar 3 ii 6–19).

Finally, mountains were sources of wealth and booty and places of origin of the timber, stones and metals used to build and embellish various constructions. Thus in the East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar II 2 ii 30–42:

> "I had silver, gold, precious (and) valuable stone(s), copper, *musukkannu*-wood, cedar, anything that is valuable, gleaming produce, the yield of the mountains, the wealth of the seas, substantial tribute, lavish gift(s) brought into my city, Babylon, into his (Marduk's) presence, and I provisioned Esagil, the palace of his lordly majesty."

And further in the same text iii 18–35:

> "My heart dearly wanted me to (re)build Esagil (and) I was constantly attentive (towards it). I constantly sought out the best of my cedar that I had carried off from Mount Lebanon, the holy forest, to be the roof of Eumuša, the cella of his supreme power, and (my) mind pondered about (it). I clad the (beams of) hard cedar for the roof of Eumuša with bright gold. I decorated the *šīpu*s below the cedar roof with gold and precious stone(s). I prayed all day to the king of the gods, the lord of lords (Marduk) to (re)build Esagil."

Conclusion

To sum up, the available evidence suggests that already in second-millennium Babylonia wild goats were connected to royal power and ideology. The hunt of the wild goat, as of other wild animals, was a common trope in royal ideology, and the male wild goat was the Babylonian equivalent to the lion hunted by the Assyrians. For the Babylonians, it seems that hunting this beautiful, fast and intelligent animal, the true king of the mountains, was symbolically as powerful as hunting a ferocious lion. The goat was a political allegory, the totemic symbol of Babylonian royalty and appears as such in the royal seals. The two symbols, the lion and the goat, can be considered equivalent in the Assyrian and Babylonian conceptions of kingship. In addition, mountains are charged with multifaceted nuances. They represent a wild, liminal world, the domain of chaos, in which the rules of civilization do not apply, but at the same time they are magical places, where fantastic creatures dwell. Mountains are coveted for their resources, and admired for the geographical immensity and majestic landscapes which symbolize the dominion of the known world. The conquest of the mountains, embodied by the wild goat in Babylonian glyptic imagery, is the defeat of chaos, the restoration of order, and at the same time the conquest and control of liminal lands and of their enormous wealth.

Abbreviations used

AO	Objects in the collections of the Musée du Louvre.
BM	Objects in the collections of the British Museum.
IM	Objects in the collections of the Iraq Museum.
RINAP 3/2	Grayson, A.K. and J. Novotny 2014.
RINAP 5/1	Novotny, J. and J. Jeffers 2019.
WBA	Da Riva, R. 2012.

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Chapter 26:
A preliminary survey of the documentation from Dilbat and several other places in Central and Northern Babylonia chiefly during the long 6th century BCE

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Abstract. This paper is based on an analysis of 90 mostly unpublished documents from Dilbat chiefly from 626-484 BCE (several deeds are late-Achaemenid). The total number of economic documents from Dilbat dated or datable between 626 and 484 BCE is *c.* 240. In addition, 12 coeval documents from other sites in central Babylonia are included (altogether 102 documents) and many published NB/LB documents from Dilbat are digested. The topography of both the intramural city of Dilbat and its region is discussed. Thereafter follows a presentation of the archive of Dilbat's main temple and 18 Dilbatean private archives. Documents issued in Dilbat but belonging to external archives (from Babylon, Sippar, Uruk and Larsa as well as unprovenanced deeds) as well as material from the Dailem Collection of the British Museum are also discussed.

Keywords: Dilbat, Dailem, temple and private archives

Preamble[1]

I present below 90 documents from Dilbat chiefly from the long 6th century BCE (626-484 BCE). Most of these documents (73) are unpublished. The total number of documents from Dilbat dated or datable to this period is approximately 240.[2] Most of the texts published below are housed in the British Museum. The second-largest group published below belongs to the Horn Museum of the Andrews University (at least 17 texts).[3] Five documents belong to the Yale Babylonian collection. More documents will be included in a forthcoming publication, where a comprehensive analysis and indexes of the available material from Dilbat will be offered.

There follow two additional deeds from the archive of Akkad -ēreš. In addition, ten documents from other sites in central and northern Babylonia are included. Only two out of them were published before. Altogether 102 documents are presented below, of which only 19 were published before. In addition, more published documents are digested. The section on Dilbat opens with a fairly comprehensive description of this city and its region which starts in *ca.* 859 BCE and ends in the late Achaemenid period.

[1] Please see the end of the chapter for acknowledgements and abbreviations used.
[2] See Jursa 2005: 98; cf. Ni. 2642 and Ni. 2577 from Nbk. II's time according to Unger 1938: 219b. For Dilbat in 747–627 BCE see Nielsen 2011: 103–125 (35 documents according to Brinkman and Kennedy 1983: 89b), and on its documentation during the late Achaemenid period Hackl 2013, 1: 538-539; 2: 102–104 (three documents), Stolper 1992 (13 documents) as well as BM 49944 (4.VIII.24 Art., probably II), BM 54657 (2.II.33 Art. I) and BM 103501 (below, 1.3.3.2, 8).
[3] An additional document may be HAM 73.2894. Another document from Dilbat in the same museum, HAM 73.2957 – (54 x 41 x 22 mm., 2.III.22 Art. I/II), was published by Stolper 1992: 127–128.

1. Dilbat (modern Tall id-Dēlam)[4]

1.1. Elements of historical geography of Dilbat and its region

1.1.1. The intra-mural city[5]

Dilbat was a temple city in central Babylonia. It is identified with the mound of Tall id-Dēlam (45º19'/32º3') which is situated about 25 km south of Babylon and 15 km southeast of Borsippa. Tall id-Dēlam actually consists of twin mounds. The remains of Dilbat have been partially unearthed in the eastern mound, which was occupied from the Early Dynastic period to the Achaemenid period. The nearby mound, Tall Muḫaṭṭaṭ (5.5 km from Tall id-Dēlam), does not necessarily form part of ancient Dilbat.[6]

The main temple of Dilbat was E-ibbi-Anu.[7] The temple existed also in the late Achaemenid period and the veneration of the gods Uraš and Lā-gamal persisted, as can be judged from the continuation of the naming tradition in that period. There is a doubtful reference to the temple of Lā-gamal in an undated NB/LB letter.[8] In addition, there is a reference to property of Ištar of Dilbat in 601 BCE (cf. below, 1.3.1.2.11), but no explicit information about a shrine of hers at that time. A quarter of Dilbat was named after the Šamaš gate of the city wall according to a deed from 10.VI.550 BCE,[9]

[4] See Bagg 2020: 174–175 with lit.; Unger 1931, 1938; *Rép. Géogr.* 8: 118–119; Jursa 2010: 89–90.
[5] See Unger 1938: 220–221, 222b–224a.
[6] For the archaeological background see Armstrong 1992.
[7] Cf. Almamori and Bartelmus 2021.
[8] See Spar and Jursa 2014: 165 *ad* 105, 8.
[9] BM 61153 (cf. Zadok 2000).

where there was a narrow street. The first section of a compendium from 22.X.29 Nabû-apla-iddina = *ca.* 859 BCE records a street of Lā-gamal (^{d}La-ga-ma-al).[10] The main gate of the city wall was named after its main god Uraš. Another gate in the city wall was named E-bi-šú. A very damaged name of a gate in the city wall (perhaps of Dilbat) is ⌜xx⌝-se from the time of Nabonidus.[11]

1.1.2. The Extra-mural locales (suburbs and rural sites and watercourses)[12]

The information about the topography of Dilbat and its region is entirely indirect. It can be deduced to a very limited extant mostly from economic documents concerning agricultural transactions. Therefore it is difficult in most cases to distinguish between suburbs of Dilbat and rural settlements of its region.

A palm grove above and below Harri-Ṣalmūnītu (har-ri ṣa-al-mu-ni-tu$_4$) was situated opposite the E-bi-šú city gate in the province of Dilbat according to a deed from the Egibi archive, which was issued in Babylon on 2.I.10 Dar. I = 512 BCE:[13]

Upper long side: Nabû-zēra-iddina /Nabû-ēṭir -napšāti and Šâ-am-il (DINGIR^{meš}) the Aramean;
Lower long side: Nabû-zēra-iqīša //Ēpeš-ilī, Lā-gamal-iddina /Uraš-iddina and Nabû-balāssu-iqbi;
Upper short side: Bēl-īpuš /Lā-gamal-iddina;
Lower short side: Nabû-zēra-iqīša /Nabû-zēra-ukīn, Nabû-ittannu /Kīnâ and Šuma-uṣur /Nabû-ušallim.

The orchard of *hallatu* bears a name which is an abbreviation of *hallatu* of the 30th day,[14] thereby expressing its link to the prebendary system of the temple complex of Dilbat, whose main sanctuary was E-ibbi-Anu (of the chief god Uraš). This institutional orchard included not only palm groves (probably including plots of less common fruits) but also fields where cereals were grown. It was situated very close to the old city wall and its moat (*harīṣu)* opposite the Uraš gate of the city wall and adjacent to the way of Akītu temple, where the procession of Uraš took place (KASKAL^{II} *šá a-ki-tu$_4$ 8mu-ta-qu* ^{d}URAš).[15] This way was a section of the highway. Therefore Coocquerillat (1973) suggested that *hallatu* was the orchard of the extra-mural temple of Akītu. The moat which implicitly received its water from the Euphrates, served as the main irrigation ditch of the *hallatu*-orchard. The canal Harru-ša-bīt-Šamaš-ēreš (SÙR šá É-^{md}UTU-KAM) flowed in it or near it.[16] There was at least one more *hallatu*-orchard which was named after another day of the month and was adjacent to that of the 30th day. Cocquerillat hypothesized that there were 30 parcels of the *hallatu*-orchard, each named after a different day of the month and that this orchard was situated Southwest of the city of Dilbat. The *hallatu* of the 30th day extended as far as the irrigated area of A-ṣu-nu north of Dilbat. A-ṣu-n[u] is preceded by the irrigated area of Šinqu (or Ruqqu, ^{garim}šin <or ruq>-qu) in a damaged deed from Dilbat,10. II.20[+x] Nbk. II = sometime between 584 and 577 BCE.[17]

The settlement of Āl-Abul-Šamaš (URU KÁ.GAL ^{d}UTU) was named after the city gate of Šamaš, implicitly opposite it. It was situated in the meadow (*ugāru)* of Dilbat (A.GÀR dil-bat^{ki}). It was adjacent to the new wall of Dilbat. Harru-ša-Lā-gamal (^{3}har-ri šá $^{4.d}$la-ga-ma-al) flowed in it according to a deed from 15 Kand. = 633 BCE.[18] The same canal flowed in the "fifties" of Iddinâ (SUM^{na}-a)/Zākiru (za-kir) and Iddinu (SUM^{na})/Ēpeš-ili (DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR) in Bēl-ibni's 2nd year (701 BCE).[19] Arittu-ša-Bīt-bārî[20] flowed not far from the irrigated area (GA[RIM]) of Na-⌜gu-ú.[21] Both were linked to the irrigated area of A-ṣu-nu and very probably were part of it. They were situated in the meadow (*ugāru*) of Dilbat, i.e. very close to the city. The canal might have flowed near the settlement of Bīt-bārî (^{uru}É-^{lú}HAL). The latter is the place of issue of a deed from 11.XII.14 Dar. II = 409 BCE, where the master of the deliverer of dates bears the name Uraš-nāṣir (^{d}URAŠ-PAP) which is typical of Dilbat.[22] Nagû is recorded as a topographical term in the NB/LB documentation from Uruk.[23] The irrigated area of Bazīya (^{garim}Ba-zi-iá) was also situated in the meadow of Dilbat. It included a "fifty"-plot of Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Saggilu (sag-gi-lu, 29.I.23 Asb. = 646 BCE).[24] A palm grove which was situated in ^{garim}Ba-zi-ia was adjacent to the canal Ḫarru-ša-bīt-Salāmu (ḫar-ri šá É–sa-la-mu) according to a deed which was issued 211 years later.[25] This canal was named after the Dilbatean clan (*bītu*) of Salāmu.[26] A sector of Bazīya extended from the Euphrates as far as the dike (*kilâti*,

[10] Paulus 2014: 674:MZŠ I, 2, 16.
[11] Sandowicz 2019: 12–18:4 = BM 40788 + 40823, 10.
[12] See Unger 1938: 218, 221b–222a; Jursa 2010: 399–405.
[13] *Dar*. 265 = Wunsch, *Egibi* 2, 13, 8a–14.
[14] See Cocquerillat 1973: 100–102 (the following discussion concerning this orchard heavily relies on her thorough analysis); cf. Joannès 2000: 27–28.
[15] VS 5, 105, 7f.
[16] VS 5, 110, 5, 13.
[17] NBC 8388 (below, 1.3.3.7, 1).
[18] OECT 10, 397 = YBC 11384, 2ff. (cf. Brinkman and Kennedy 1983: 45:L.91, 92; Joannès 2000: 38; Jursa 2005: 100–101:7.4.3; Jursa 2010: 404).
[19] OECT 10, 391, 392 (cf. Jursa 2005: 100–101:7.4.3; Jursa 2010: 403). The canal is also recorded in OECT 10, 393, 394 and 396 from Dilbat (Sargonid period).
[20] The 2nd component is homonymous with the toponym Bīt-bārî which refers to settlements in the documentation from Sippar and Uruk (*Rép. Géogr*. 8: 84, s.v.).
[21] BRM 1, 38, 6–7.
[22] OECT 10, 140, 6. The toponym (line 12) is homonymous with settlements in the documentation from Sippar and Uruk (cf. *Rép. Géogr*. 8: 84, s.v. Bīt-bārî 1, 2).
[23] See Zadok 2021: 249 with 89.
[24] OECT 10, 399 (see Nielsen 2011: 113 with 396; cf. Jursa 2005: 100–101:7.4.3; Jursa 2010: 404).
[25] Hackl 2013, 2: 103–104:145 = BM 48933, 5f. (Babylon, 30 Art. I = 435/4 BCE).
[26] Cf. Nielsen 2011: 113, n. 394; 2015: 323, s.v.

569 BCE, see below, 1.3.1.2.1, 11). A palm grove situated in a sector of the irrigated area of Bazīya (KÁ šá garim?ba-zi-ia) is recorded sometime during the long 6th century BCE.[27] The irrigated areas of Baṣṣānu and Namkar-mārē (garimNAM.GÀR DUMUmeš)[28] were located in the district (*pīhatu*) of Dilbat, like [...]-qu-du.[29]

Homonymous toponyms are Hallatu and Aṣūnu near Borsippa.[30] The area "above the city" (*muhhi-āli*) in relation to Dilbat is recorded as early as 694 BCE,[31] where it is mentioned together with *kan-du-re-e* and *ši-i-hi* (lines 6 and 10 respectively). The latter term is recorded as early as 21,IX.11 Marduk-zākir-šumi I = *c.* 844 BCE: a kudurru-inscription (a compendium of two land grants) has *ši-hi šá* dURAŠ,[32] i.e. belonging to the Uraš temple (E-ibbi-Anu), but it cannot be proven that it refers to the same plot as the later *ši-i-hi*.[33] Ši-*i-hi* šá Uraš refers to arable land which was sold according to a deed from Dilbat dated to 10? Nbn. = 546/5? BCE.[34] The area "above the city" is also mentioned later.[35] For the topographical term *kan-du-re-e*[36] cf. Harru-ša-*ka-an-du-ú-ri* in the region of Borsippa.[37]

Meadows (sg. *ugār u*)[38] situated above the city are recorded.[39] Likewise, an area "below the city" (*Šupāl-āli)* is recorded in relationship to Dilbat. The Muhhi-āli area is to be sought near Dilbat (0;1 kor of arable land, 12.IV.12 Npl = 614 B.C.),[40] the more so since the scribe, Lāgamal-iddina //Šangû-Dilbat, is from Dilbat as well as at least one of the neighbours (Erība-Uraš /Rāšilu). The Ēpeš-ilī clan is not a Borsippan one: both parties, viz. the seller Nabû-nāṣir (or -uṣur)/Ṣulū'a, son-in-law of Iddina/Zēra-ibni (with fingernail mark) and the buyer Bēl-rēmanni (a neighbour), as well as both witnesses, Nāṣiru and Aplâ, belong to this clan.

A Shrine of the goddess Bēlet-ekalli (dNIN-É.GAL) was in the steppe outside Dilbat according to a deed from 10.XI.2 Nbn. = 553 BCE.[41] A settlement (named after a canal) bearing her name, viz. Nār-Bēlet-ekalli (urunа-ri-dNIN-É.GAL), is recorded on 7.V.9 Xer. = 477 BCE.[42] It was apparently near Dilbat seeing that the deed concerns a sale of a field adjacent to Harri-ša-Uraš (har-ri šá dURAŠ). The latter is recorded earlier.[43] The irrigated area of Kār-Uraš (garimkar-dURAŠ) belonged to the "fifty" of Balāṭu /Nummuru (nu-um-mur). The canals Har-ra ša Ri-man-di-⌞x⌟ (apparently non-Sem.) and Har-ra ša lúšà-tam (i.e. that of the chief temple administrator) flowed there in 7 Esarh. = 674 BCE.[44]

Āl-Uraš (URU dURAŠ)[45] is mentioned in a promissory note concerning delivery of barley in Dilbat (archive of the Dilbatean Ea-qarrād-ilī). The yield of the dates from palm groves which were situated in the irrigated area of Hūpēti (garimHu-pe-e-ti,[46] pl. of *hūpu*) and the irrigated area of Til-Bēltu (garimDU$_6$-dGAŠAN)[47] was delivered at Dilbat. The dike of the Scythians (*Gimirāyu*) is recorded on 2.IX.29 Dar. I = 493 BCE[48] and that of the Elamites is mentioned five years later (6.XII.33 Dar. I = 488 BCE).[49] These microtoponyms are an indication that these foreigners held land near Dilbat.[50] kurBa-bi,[51] which is recorded in a deed concerning dates from the Dilbatean archive of Ea-qarrād-ilī, is not recorded elsewhere. The reading of the micrtoponym KÁ maš?-la-tu$_4$ is uncertain.[52] Its relative location and relationship to Dilbat are not known. Harru-ša-Nabû-ēṭir (har-ri šá md+AG-SUR), Harru-ša-Bāni-ahi (har-ri šá DÙ-ꞋŠEŠ¬?), Ālu-ša-Rēmūtu (URU šá mre-mut) and the property of the Bā'iru clan (É lúŠU.KU$_6$) are recorded together with the above-mentioned Harru-ša-Lā-gamal (har-ri šá dla-ga-mil) in a damaged administrative document whose place of issue and date are not indicated.[53] The following plots (a-c) are recorded in a deed of litigation from [Dilbat], [x+]1 Nbn.:[54]

a. Arable land stretching from Harru-ša-Lā-gamal (Ꞌhar¬-r[i Ꞌšá¬ dla-Ꞌga¬-ma-al]) up to Arittu-ša-Bīt-Naggāri (Ꞌa¬-rat-ti šá É-lúNAGAR);
b. Ten "fifty" plots belonging to Nabû-šuma-iddina (d+AG-MU-MU)/Nergal-ušallim (dU.GUR-GI), who is linked to (c);
c. A palm grove, which was adjacent to the property of Iqīšâ (BAšá-a)/ Nabû-ibni (Ꞌrd+AG¬-DÙ) stretched from Harru-ša-Lā-gamal (h[ar-ri] Ꞌšá¬ dla-Ꞌga¬-m[a-al]) up to Arittu-ša-Bīt-Raši-il (a-Ꞌrit-ti¬ šá É-mSUD-Ꞌil¬).

[27] BM 103520, 2 (date lost).
[28] BM 92798, 3.
[29] VS 6, 171, 1.
[30] Zadok 2006: 406:2.1, 1, 411:2.1, 17a (cf. 422–423), cf. Birīt-aṣūnē (Zadok 2006: 409:2.1, 9 with 7).
[31] Böhl 1948= San Nicolò, *Bab. Rechtsurkunden*, 40, 4.
[32] Paulus 2014: 675:MZŠ I, 2, rev. 16.
[33] Cf. Zadok 2004, 332f.:BM 134969.
[34] YOS 19, 3, 7.
[35] Cf. Zadok 2006: 394 :1.1, 2 with 6 and BRM 1, 56, 2.
[36] CAD K: 149b, s.v. *kandurû*, 3.
[37] Zadok 2006: 418: 2.2.6, 3b.
[38] In certain contexts they seem to denote sub-districts.
[39] A.GÀRmeš šá UGU URU, 22.VI.37 Nbk. II = 568 BCE (BM 103543, 2f.).
[40] Cf. Zadok 2004, 332f.:BM 134969.
[41] VS 5, 21, 9f.
[42] It is the place of issue of BM 47400 + 47596.
[43] BM 103581, 3 from 16.V.37 Nbk. = 568 BCE.
[44] OECT 10, 395 (cf. Nielsen 2011: 113, 396). There is no telling whether it is the same place as MB Kar-dURAŠki in a document which was found in Nippur (*Rép. Géogr*. 5: 161, bottom: CBS 13488, 2).
[45] BM 103609, 8.
[46] Farber and Farber 2018: 219–220:NUL 03.
[47] VS 3, 209, 2.
[48] Roth 1989–1990: 55: 16: BM 92799, 16 (the term originally meant "Cimmerians", but came to denote "Scythians" from the Achaemenid period onwards).
[49] BM 77426, 8–9.
[50] See Jursa 2010: 403–404, 459.
[51] BM 103610, 6'.
[52] BM 103607, 2.
[53] BM 103534. For the Bā'iru clan in early NB Dilbat cf. Nielsen 2011: 113, 394; 2015: 47–49, s.v.
[54] Sandowicz 2019: 12-18:4 = BM 40788 + 40823, 14–19.

A plot of land and a house, which were situated on [Harru?]-ša-Lā-gamal (^{d}⌜la-ga-ma-al), belonged to Tabnēa (tab-né-e-a)/Bēl-iqīša (^{d}+EN-BA^{šá})//Šangû-Mārat-bīti (^{lú}É.BAR ⌜^{d}DUMU⌝ <text: NIN>.SAL.É) and to Amurru-iq[bi] (^{d}KUR.⌜GAL-iq⌝-[bi])/Marduk-erība (^{d}AMAR.UTU-⌜SU⌝).[55] They were adjacent to the property of Haddâ ? ([h]a?-ad-da-a)/Nādinu (na-din)//Ašābšu (a-šá-ab-⌜šú⌝) and Gūzānu (gu-za-nu)/Etel-pî (e-⌜tel-pi⌝) of the same clan (Dilbat, -.-.2 Nerigl. = 558/7 BCE).[56]

The irrigated area of Dullāpi ($^{garim?}$Dul-la-pi < Aram. "dripping")[57] is the location of a palm grove whose dates were delivered in Dilbat,[58] a possible indication of its location in the Dilbat region. Ālu-ša-Nūrēa (URU šá ^{m}ZÁLAG-e-a) is the place of issue of a promissory note of the Dailem collection from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (II, III or IV).[59] It is presumably named after the debtor Nūrēa /Nabû-nāṣir (^{d}+AG-na-ṣir)//Nabû-lissu (^{d}+AG-lit-su). The debt consists of 13 shekels of silver and 3;2 kors of barley owed to Nergal-iddina (^{d}U.GUR-MU)/Bau-šuma-iddina (^{d}KÁ-MU-MU)//Sîn -tabni (^{d}XXX-tab-ni), probably the archive owner. Nūrēa's slave (^{lú}*qal-la*), Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur (^{d}+AG-ina-ka-ri-lu-mur) is pledged on behalf of the creditor. The names of the witnesses are not preserved. The scribe is [...]/Nergal-zēra-ibni (^{d}U.G[UR]-NUMUN-DÙ)//[...]. Other places of issue of deeds from the Dailem collection are Ālu-ša-Ea-zēra-ibni (concerning dates, 8.IV.5 Cyr. = 534 BCE),[60] Kār-Nuska-ekalli (field sale, 2.XII.33 Nbk. II = 571 BCE),[61] and Ālu-ša-rab-šarri (concerning dates, 27.V.3 Xer. = 483 BCE).[62] The reading of the last component of each of the last two toponyms is subject to collation. Ālu-ša-Līšir (URU šá ^{m}li-šìr) is the place of delivery of barley according to a deed belonging to the Ea-qarrād-ilī archive from Dilbat.[63] A deed[64] of the archive of (Marduk-)šāpik-zēri/Bammâ //Egibi, whose main focus was Dilbat, but also includes deeds issued in Babylon, is about purchase of a palm grove in the meadow of Dūru-ša-Šulâ (BÀD šá ^{m}šu-la-') in the district (*pîhatu*) of ^{uru}Kal-du on Nāru-ša-Balāssu ([I]$_{7}$ ^{3}šá ^{m}ba-laṭ-su) and Nār-Kaldu (I$_{7}$ Kal-du)[65] in Sîn-šumu-lišir's accession year (perhaps 626 BCE). The deed was issued in Babylon. These locales were not very close to Dilbat. All one can state is that general location in central Babylonia may not be far off the mark. Toponyms of the type Dūr(u ša) PN are typical, but not exclusive, to tribal regions which accords well with the fact that Dūru-ša-Šulâ belonged to the district of Kaldu, i.e. "the Chaldean settlement" with a homonymous canal. Nār-Kaldu flowed near Harri šá Ninurta (^{d}MAŠ) in the settlement of Iltuk which belonged to the Chaldean territory of Bīt-Dakkūri according to a deed from 10.VIII.3 Cyr. = 536 BCE.[66] This territory was close to Babylon, Borsippa and Dilbat.

Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Bēl-ahhē-erība (^{d}+EN-ŠEŠ^{meš}-SU) is the 2nd = last witness of a promissory note[67] concerning 14 kors of dates [estimated yield (of a palm grove)], tithe of ^{d}⌜URAŠ?⌝ and *gu-gal-la*-impost, charged by Qunnabatu? (^{f}qu-u[n-na-ba-tu$_{4}$?])/Kudurru (NÍG.DU) against Nabû-zēra-iqīša (^{d}+AG-NUMUN-BA^{šá})/Aba-ul-īde (AD-NU-ZU). The delivery (in the measure of one *pānu* in the enclosure) is in one instalment in month VII together with by-products (notably two? *darīku*-containers). The deed was issued in Patti (^{i7}pát-ti) Bīt-Ah(V)nu (É ^{m}ŠEŠ-nu) on 10.[x].34 Nbk. II = 571/0 BCE. Was the place of issue not far from Dilbat?

Bīt-Šūzuba-ile''i? (or -GIR-DA?)[68] is the place of issue of one of the two deeds (23.III.15 Dar. II = 409 BCE)[69] which belong to the text group (within the Belšunu = "Kasr" archive) of Uraš-nāṣir (^{d}URAŠ-PAP)/Ibnâ (ib-na-a); the latter's given name is unmistakenly Dilbatean. The settlement was linked (according to the second deed from *c.* 3 Dar. II = 421/0 BCE) to Nār-Tašmētu, somewhere in central Babylonia, possibly not far from Babylon and Borsippa. Was the above-mentioned settlement not far from Dilbat? Barley, property of Mulliltu, is recorded in a deed from late Achaemenid Dilbat.[70] This goddess had a shrine in Babylon.

1.2. Links with other Babylonian sites

Many of the Urban clans which are recorded in the early NB period (before 626 BCE) recur in the long 6th century.[71] However, no such clans are recorded at Dilbat after 484 BCE. Evidence for inner-Babylonian immigration to Dilbat is very rare and implicit. Noteworthy is the paternal name *Barsipāyu* (⌜*bár*⌝*.sipa^{ki}*-A+A) "Borsippean" whose son, Nidinti-Bēl, acted as the second witness in a deed from Dilbat on 23.I.16 Xer. = 470 BCE.[72] A descendant of the prominent clan of Šangû-Dilbat (Kudurru /Bēl-ēṭir) acted as the debtor in a deed from the archive of Marduk-šāpik-zēri/Bammâ //Egibi.[73] The deed was issued in Babylon (16.IX.15 Kand. = 633 BCE), but the

[55] Sandowicz (2019: 49) aptly remarks that since he has no surname he did not belong to the urban elite. However, Amurru is not a West Semitic theophorous element.
[56] Sandowicz 2019: 47-52:16 = BM 47475, 1-14a.
[57] Cf. OSyr. *dwlp*(') /*dullāp*(*ā*)/.
[58] BM 103575 (below, 1.3.1.2.1, 12).
[59] BM 49698, 18.
[60] BM 47351 = Bertin 1665.
[61] BM 47405.
[62] BM 47532.
[63] HAM 73.3022, 4' below.
[64] OECT 10, 400 (cf. Jursa 2010: 404 with n. 2323).
[65] Cf. Zadok [and Zadok] 2005: 633 *ad* 9.
[66] Baker 2004, 54, 20.
[67] OECT 10, 73. He is preceded by Nāṣiru (na-ṣir)/ Bēl-ēṭir (d+EN-SUR)//Balāṭu (ba-la-ṭu). The scribe is Lā-abâši (la-ba-ši)/Aplâ (A-a)//Ardi-Nergal (ÌR-^{d}GIR$_{4}$-KÙ).
[68] Cf. Hackl 2013, 1: 427.
[69] Moore, *Michigan Coll.* 45, 7. The other deed is Moore, *Michigan Coll.* 49; cf. Hackl 2013, 1: 427.
[70] BM 103501 (see below, 1.3.3.2, 8).
[71] Cf. Wunsch 2014, *passim*.
[72] Hackl 2013, 2: 102: 143, 14f.
[73] OECT 10, 12.

main focus of the archive was in Dilbat;[74] connections of Dilbat with the capital are amply recorded throughout the long 6th century BCE.[75] The principal Nabû-ušallim / Uraš-zēra-uṣur occurs in a deed[76] from 31 Dar. I = 491/0 BCE, whose place of issue is severely damaged and the traces exclude a reading Dilbat. A fragmentary deed from V.[x] Nbk. II/IV concerning a house in a quarter of Dilbat was issued in Gummānu (in central Babylonia, presumably near Borsippa and Babylon). It may be that the buyer was from there (see below, 1.3.3.1, 3). The creditor of a promissory note, which was issued in Kār-Nabû (not far from Babylon or further east near the Tigris)[77] on 22,XII<a>.13 Dar. I = 508 BCE, is Uraš-nāṣir (^{d}URAŠ-na-ṣir)/Bānīya (DÙ-a). The debt is a 0;2 kor of barley charged against Bēl-ibni (^{d}+EN-DÙ)/Na-ṣi-ri-na-ta-nu (Aramaic paternal name). It is an exceptionally long term loan: the debtor has to repay it in II.17 Dar. I = 505 BCE (during the harvest season), i.e. after more than three years and four months. The three witnesses and the scribe have filiations with the theophorous elements Bēl and Nabû that are common in central Babylonia, viz. Lā-abâši /Bēl-ittannu, Rībatu /Bēl-ēṭir, Mērehtu / Nabû-bēl-māri; and ^{d}URAŠ-na-ṣir)/Bānīya (DÙ-a) as well as Bēl-ibni/Nabû-erība (scribe).

The only preserved witness, Nādinu (na-din)/Uraš-ušallim (^{d}URAŠ-GI) and the scribe Uraš-uballiṭ (^{d}URAŠ-TIN^{iṭ})/[...]//Nappāhu (^{lú}SIMUG) of a deed from Cutha (22.-.4 Nbk. II = 601/0 BCE),[78] have filiations with the theophorous element Uraš which is typical of Dilbat. It was cautiously suggested that the Dullupu clan, whose members were active in Cutha, Qalūnu and Babylon, originated in Dilbat.[79]

The seller of a female slave according to a fragmentary deed of sale from Dilbat, -.XI.- Npl.,[80] Illil-šuma-iddina/Iddū[tu]? (id-du-[tú]?), was probably from Nippur, not only in view of his name (anthroponyms with Illil and Ninurta occur, albeit rarely, in Dilbat), but also in view of the fact that the tablet originally belonged to a private collection where most of the tablets originated from Nippur (the collection was assembled by H.V. Hilprect who had organized the first excavation of Nippur). Illil-šuma-iddina sold Le'a[tu] (^{f}le-˙-a-[tu], described as *fṣa-har-ta-šú*, i.e. "a girl of his") for one mina of silver. The names of the buyer and the witnesses are not preserved and that of the scribe is severely damaged (Ì[R-...]). Slaves are often objects of long distance trade. It can be envisaged that the buyer was from Dilbat (buyers generally kept records of their significant purchases). A link with Nippur is offered also by the second deed which was issued in Dilbat (28.VI.7 Npl. = 619 BCE)[81] and belongs to the same collection. It is a promissory note for silver with guarantee. The scribe Illil-šākin-šumi /Illil-aha-iddina [82] was in all probability Nippurean in view of his filiation. This also applies to at least one principal, viz. Illil-aha-iddina/Na-[x] x$^{\urcorner}$[x]. The creditor, Kusu-nāṣir (^{d}kù-sù-na-ṣir)/Dummuq, is homonymous with the debtor's paternal name. The whereabouts of the transaction, which is on the face of it a rather common loan of just ten shekels of silver, are unknown as the second part of the operative section, where a guarantor is apparently mentioned, is damaged. It might have included atypical details (such as a share of [PN]) which may be a clue to its link with Nippur. A promissory note of 15 shekels of silver belongs to the archive of Libluṭ / Ninurta-ibni from Nippur.[83] It is stated that the debtor, Ardi-Gula (ÌR-^{d}gu-la)/Tabnēa (tab-né-e-a) is obliged – if he does not repay on time – to deliver two seahs of barley for one shekel (of silver) according to the rate of month III (during the harvest) in Dilbat. This leaves no doubt that the debtor was from Dilbat. This may apply to the second (last) witness, Sîn -kudurru (^{d}XXX-NÍG.DU)/Etellu (e-tel-lu). The first witness, Ninurta-bana/Ninurta-aha-iddina, and the scribe, Širikti-Ninurta /Ulūlāyu, were from Nippur.[84] A promissory note for one mina of silver with 20% interest and pledge (antichresis)[85] was found in Nippur (during the second season of excavations), but was issued in Dilbat on 12.X.8 Nbk. II = 596 BCE. Both the creditor, Ina-bīt-Ea-kittu /Nādinu and the debtor, Šamaš-iddina /Ilu-uṣur?, bear surnames.[86] Three-tier filiations are common at Dilbat but rare at Nippur. The guarantor, Ninurta-ušallim /Ahhē-lūmur bears a name with the theophorous element Ninurta which is typical of Nippur. All the three witnesses, viz. Illil-aha-iddina/Aplâ, Ninurta-udammiq/Etellu and Iddin-Illil/Ninurta-nādin, as well as the scribe Mušēzib-Ninurta /Kusu-[...], bore typically Nippurean names (with Illil and Ninurta). The debtor has to repay 46 shekels of silver of which 1/6 is alloy, and 15 shekels (of silver) of which 1/8 is alloy. It is noteworthy that 1/6 of a shekel alloy is rarely recorded. Actually it recurs in two deeds of the Egibi archive, which were issued in the same year as CBS 12548, namely *Nbk.* 68 (from Babylon) and 76 (from Huṣṣēti-ša-Nabû-immē)[87] from 1.X.8 and 10.VI.9 Nbk. II (596 BCE).[88]

Several individuals bearing names with Uraš are recorded in an undated barley disbursement, from the archive of the Ebabbar temple of Sippar:[89]

[74] See Jursa 2005: 100:7.4.3.
[75] See Jursa 2010: 129–130, 136–137.
[76] OECT 10, 145.
[77] *Dar*. 364 (6, 13, see Zadok, *Rép. géogr*. 6: 196, s.v. ~ 1 (cf. 426).
[78] OECT 10, 44, rev. 4'–6'.
[79] See Jursa 2010: 126 with n. 727.
[80] TuM 2/3, 18 = San Nicolò, *Bab. Rechrsurkunden*: 89–90:38.
[81] TuM 2/3, 126.
[82] d+EN-LÍL-ŠEŠ-M[U]: Krückmann (TuM 2/3: 25b, 26b, s.vv.) restored -b[ul-liṭ], but the copy looks more like -M[U].
[83] See Zadok [and Zadok] 2005: 628-632 *ad* BM 27884 (on 631–632).
[84] See Zadok [and Zadok] 2005: 632.
[85] CBS 12545.
[86] The former's surname, *Tu-ni*-i, may originally be Kassite (like *Tu-na-a* which is recorded as a surname at Dilbat, BM 47358, 12).
[87] Cf. CAD S: 342a.
[88] Kudurru /Iqīšâ //Egibi is creditor in *Nbk*. 68 (where the debtor also belongs to the Egibi clan) and debtor in *Nbk*. 76.
[89] Spar and Jursa 2014, 65.

Kāṣiru, the washerman, s. of Uraš-ahhē-iddina, the overseer (^{lú}PA);

Uraš-iddina, slave of Iddinâ, Uraš-aha-iddina and Iddin-Uraš. It is stated that the barley has been issued for expenses directly from the boat; prebendary gardeners (^{lú}GAL DÙ) are mentioned at the end. Admittedly, these hints do not amount to an adequate understanding of the whereabouts of the scenario, but the record has relevance to Dilbat and may refer to a connection of Sippar (-region) with Dilbat at least partially by boats.

The following two early NB deeds had been issued in Dilbat, but were found during controlled excavations in Ur. Both belong to the archive of Sîn-uballiṭ from Ur:[90]

UET 4, 202 Dilbat, 27.VIb.5 Npl. = 621 BCE; lawsuit concerning payment for stolen goods the receipt of which is denied

1. ^{md}XXX-TIN^{it} a-na ^{md}AMAR.UTU-na-ṣir A ^{m}bi-ta-ah-hu
2 (inserted under the 2nd half of line 1). ki-a-am iq-bi
3. um-ma sa-ar-ta a-na pa-ni-ka
4. ^{md}AMAR.UTU-NUMUN-DÙ ul-te-ri-bi ár-ki-šú
5. ^{md}AMAR.UTU-PAP A ^{md}+AG-BA^{šá} A ^{m}bi-ta-ah-hu ki-a-am iq-ba-áš-šú
6. um-ma a-na sa-ar-ti-ka ul i-de
7. al-la 3 ^{túg}mu-ṣip-ti ina ŠU^{II}-šú a-na KÙ.BABBAR
8. an-da-har re-eh-ti ú-de-e-ka ul a-mur
9. ki-i ár-ku-ú mim-ma ina lìb-bi ú-de-e šá ^{md}XXX-TIN^{it} ina ŠU^{II}
10. ^{md}AMAR.UTU-PAP it-ta-nam-mar sa-ar-ri šu-ú
11. u_4-mu ^{md}AMAR.UTU-na-ṣir ^{md}AMAR.UTU-NUMUN-DÙ
12. i-ta-mar-ru-ma [x(x)]$_{\llcorner}{}^{\ulcorner}$x-da-HAR-šú
rev. 13. x-ši-ru-šú ^{md}[AMAR.UTU]-na-ṣir sa-ar
14. u_4-mu ^{md}XXX-TIN^{iṭ} ^{md}AMAR.UTU-NUMUN-DÙ
15. iṣ-ṣa-ab-tu 4 MAŠ GÍN KÙ.BABBAR a-na
16. ^{md}AMAR.UTU-na-ṣir i-nam-din
17. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+EN.LÍL-ba-ni A ^{md}+AG-SUR
18. ^{md}MAŠ-BAD A ^{m}šu-la-a
19. ^{md}+EN-na-ṣir A ^{m}mu-SIG$_5^{iq}$-^{d}IŠKUR
20. ^{md}+EN-NIGIN^{ir} A ^{m}ma-aṣ-ṣar-KÁ.GAL
21. ^{m}sag-gi-la A ^{m}mu-SIG$_5^{iq}$-^{d}IŠKUR
u.e. 22. $^{m.iti}$KIN-A+A A ^{md}MAŠ-MU
23. ù DUB.SAR ^{md}NUSKA-NÍG.TUKU-DINGIR^{meš}
24. A ^{m}ki-din-^{d}AMAR.UTU dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}KIN.II.KAM
le.e. 25. U_4.27.KAM MU.5.KAM
26. ^{md}+AG-A-PAP LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

Sîn -uballiṭ said in his own free will to Marduk-nāṣir desc. of Bitahhu as follows: "Marduk-zēra-ibni turned over my stolen goods to you". Thereafter Marduk-nāṣir s. of Nabû-iqīša desc. of Bitahhu said to him: "I do not know about your stolen goods, except for the three standard-size cloths that I bought from him. I did not see the rest of your goods." If later any of the goods of Sîn-uballiṭ are found in Marduk-nāṣir's possession he is the thief. When Marduk-nāṣir find out Marduk-zēra-ibni, Marduk-nāṣir is the thief. When Sîn-uballiṭ requisitions Marduk-zēra-ibni, he will give Marduk-nāṣir 4.5 shekels of silver.

Witnesses: Illil-bani /Nabû-ēṭir, Ninurta-kabtu / Šulâ, Bēl-nāṣir //Mudammiq-Adad, Bēl-upahhir // Maṣṣar-abulli, Saggil //Mudammiq-Adad, Ulūlāyu / Ninurta-iddina; and the

Scribe: Nuska-mašrû-ilī //Kidin-Marduk; Dilbat, date.

Remark

1. Sîn -uballiṭ was from Ur. On the other hand, the filiations of the other principals and witnesses may hint at their central Babylonian extraction. The rare surname recurs as Bi-tah-hi. It was borne by Nabû-kīn-zēri /Nādinu, the scribe of a deed which was issued in Hadirānu-ša-Nabû (11.I.12 Dar. I = 510 BCE), very probably in central Babylonia, as the deed belongs to the Borsippean archive of Ea-ilūta-bani.[91]

UET 4, 74 – Dilbat, 29.II.6 Npl. = 620 BCE, promissory note for silver with pledge.

1. 1 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR šá ^{m}A-a A ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-bul-liṭ
2. ina UGU ^{md}XXX-TIN^{it} A ^{md}XXX-NUMUN-SI.SÁ
3. ^{f}pa-ni-^{d}NIN.GAL-lu-mur ^{f}ṣa-har-ta-šú
4. a-ki hu-bul-lu_4 ina pa-ni ^{m}ap-la-a
5. ú-šu-uz-za-at šá KÙ.BABBAR hu-bul-ta-šú ia-a-nu
6. u ^{f}pa-ni-^{d}NIN.GAL-lu-mur
7. $_{\llcorner}{}^{\ulcorner}i_{\lrcorner}$-$_{\llcorner}$di-šú ia-a-nu ^{f}pa-ni-^{d}NIN.GAL-lu-mur
8. maš-ka-nu A.ŠÀ a-di ^{m}A-a KÙ.BABBAR-šú
rev. 9. i-šal-li-mu ^{lú}ra-šu-ú šá-nam-ma
10. a-na UGU ^{f}pa-ni-^{d}NIN.GAL-lu-mur
11. ul i-šal-laṭ
12. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}AMAR.UTU-MU-DÙ A ^{m}za-kir
13. ^{m}na-din A ^{m}ṣil-la-a ^{m}tab-né-e-a A ^{md}+AG-DA
14. ^{md}MAŠ-SU A ^{m}MU-PAP ^{m}im-ba-a A ^{m}šu-zib-ši-^{d}L
15. ù ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}MAŠ-MU A ^{m}šu-la-a
16. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}SIG$_4$ U_4.29.KAM MU.6.KAM
17. ^{md}+AG-DUMU-PAP LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

[90] See Jursa 2005: 135–137 and 2010: 119 with n. 664. The reading of the damaged name of the place of issue of UET 4, 78 from the same archive is very doubtful.

[91] See Joannès, *Archives de Borsippa* : 318 *ad* TCL 13, 189, 14–15, where he cautiously suggests an Akkadian derivation for the surname. It cannot be excluded that the surname is non-Semitic like some other surnames from 1st-millennium Babylonia.

Translation

> One mina of silver of Aplâ s. of Nabû-ahhē -bulliṭ charged against Sîn -uballiṭ s. of Sîn-zēru-līšir. Pāni-Mulliltu -lūmur, a girl owned by him, is placed (as pledge) at the disposal of Aplâ instead of (Sîn-uballiṭ's) debt. There is no interest on the silver and no wages (to pay) for Pāni-Mulliltu-lūmur. Pāni-Mulliltu-lūmur is pledged for the field until Aplâ will be fully paid his silver. No other creditor shall exercise control over Pāni-Mulliltu-lūmur.
>
> Witnesses: Marduk-šuma -ibni /Zākiru, Nādinu / Ṣillâ, Tabnēa /Nabû-lē'i, Ninurta-erība /Nādin-ahi, Imbâ /Šūzibši-Illil, and the scribe Ninurta-iddina / Šulâ; Dilbat, date.

Remarks

5. The term *hubbultu* "debt" is recorded in MB Nuzi.[92] This NB only occurrence is listed neither in AHw. nor in CAD. Here it is synonymous with *hubullu* "interest" (< "obligation, debt with interest", paralleled by the ubiquitous *ša kaspi hubullišu yānu*).[93]

8. The debt in silver might have originated in purchase of a field.

14. One expects Šūzibšu-Illil.

Uraš-šuma-ibni (^{d}URAŠ-MU-DÙ), explicitly a Dilbatean (dil-bat^{ki}-ú-a), is mentioned in a letter which was found in Ur,[94] but was apparently sent from Nippur seeing that the greeting formula is by Illil and Mulliltu.The sender is Nādin-ahi and the addressees are his equals ("brothers") Tabnēa, Bau-erība and Gišimmaru. The latter is datable according to Ebeling, *Neubabylonische Briefe*: 179 *ad* 325 to *c.* 621/0 BCE due to a prosopgraphical link to TuM 2/3, 202, 21, where Ulūlāyu s. of (A) Ninurta-iddina (UET 4, 190, 26) recurs (provided it is not a case of homonymy as both names are common). The format PN_1 A PN_2 for PN_1 son of PN_2 is typical of early NB and is replaced by PN_1 A(-*šú*) *šá* PN_2 from the 6th century BCE onwards, but it persisted sporadically in documents from Nippur also in the 6th century BCE. The litigants and most of the other individuals attending the hearing must have been immigrants from Babylon who resided in Dilbat according to a deed from [Dilbat?] dated to [x+]1 Nbn.:[95]

> Ardīya (ÌR-ia)/Nabû-nāṣir (^{d}+AG-PAP) and his brother Gabbi-ilāni-šarra-uṣur (gab-bi-DINGIR^{meš}-LUGAL-ÙRU). The latter's name implies that he was linked to the palatial sector. Their sworn litigation took place before the three city-elders of the Babylonians ([^{lú}?š]*i-bu-tu* URU DUMU TIN.TIR^{r}^{ki}$^{?}$), viz. Nabû-mušētiq-ūdê (^{r}^{d}+AG$^{?}$-mu-še-ti-<iq>-UD.^{r}DA$^{?}$)/Bēl-ammēni (^{d}+EN-am-me-ni)//Rab-banê (^{r} $^{lú?}$GAL.DÙ), Mušēzib-Bēl (mu-še-zib-^{d}+EN)/Bēl-zēra-ibni (^{d}+EN-NUMUN-DÙ)//Itinnu (^{r} $^{lú?}$ŠITIM) and Madānu-zēra-ibni (^{r}$^{d?}$DI.KU$_5$-NUMUN-DÙ)/ Aplâ (A-a)//Ēpeš-ili (DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR). For the description of the plots see above, 1.1.2. The list of witnesses is headed by Uraš-šuma-ibni (^{r}^{d}URAŠ$^{?}$-MU-DÙ)//Marduk?-erība? (^{d}AMAR.UTU?-SU?), temple enterer of Uraš, who is followed by three surnamed witnesses, viz. Bānīya (ba-ni-ia)/ Ardi-Nabû (ÌR-^{d}+AG)//[xxx-n]i?, Marduk-šuma (^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU)-^{r}x$^{?}$/Madānu-aha-iddina (^{d}DI$^{?}$.KU$_5$-ŠEŠ-MU)//Bēl (^{d}+EN)-[xxx] and Madānu (^{r}^{d}DI$^{?}$.KU$_5$)-x$^{?}$-[x]/Aplâ (A-a)//Bēl-eṭēru (^{d}+EN-e-ṭè-r[u] as well as the scribe [xxx]//Irâš-ina-Esaggil (i-ra-šú-a-na-é-sag-í[l]).

The following three individuals acted as witnesses in deeds of the Egibi archive from the region of Babylon:

> Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Nabû-ēreš ($^{12.d}$+AG-URU$_4^{eš}$)//Pahhāru (^{lú}BÁHAR), Ālu-ša-Nabû-zēra-iqīša, 27.XI.13 Dar. I = 508 BCE,[96] Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Kalbâ (kal-ba-a)//Šangû-Nanâ (^{lú}SANGA ^{d}na-na-a),[97] Bīt-Hahhūru, 20+[x]. III.14 Dar. I = 508 BCE and Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Nabû-ēreš (^{d}+AG-URU$_4^{eš}$)//Ēpeš-ili (DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR), Ālu-ša-Zumbâ, 10+[x].XI.14 Dar. I = 507 BCE.[98]

1.3. Text editions and digests

1.3.1. Archives from Dilbat

Most of the 15 recognizable archives are from Dilbat and belong to the local main temple of E-ibbi-Anu and to members of Dilbatean clans. In addition, very few documents issued in Dilbat or pertaining to it belong to non-Dilbatean temples (Ebabbar of Sippar and Eanna of Uruk); one document belong to the archive of the Egibi clan from Babylon.

1.3.1.1. The archive of the E-ibbi-Anu temple

Landed property of this temple complex[99] was administered by individuals with strong links to the temple. For the time being, a clear example is HAM 73.2873 (text 3 below), where the land is probably named after a shrine and the temple is represented by a member of a prebendary clan (Mubannû). For links between the E-ibbi-Anu temple and private archives see below, 1.3.1.2 and for an exceptional sale of temple land

[92] See AHw.: 351a with refs.
[93] Cf. CAD H: 218a, s.v. *hubullu* A, 2e.
[94] UET 4, 190, 15.
[95] See Sandowicz. 2019: 12–18:4 = BM 40788 + 40823.
[96] *Dar*. 363, 11f.
[97] BRM 1, 76 = Sandowicz 2012: 306–307: O.156, 21.
[98] *Dar*. 392 = Sandowicz 2012: 306–307: O.175, 22.
[99] See Jursa 2010: 89–90.

to an individual 1.3.1.2.18.[100] The measurer's prebend of E-ibbi-Anu is recorded in the archive of the Dābibī clan.[101]

1. BM 103649- brown, 43x28x16mm.; adm. receipt dealing with ornaments of the cult statues of Gula and Uraš hence probably from Dilbat, 25.IX.1 Nerigl. = 558 BCE.[102] It records five eye-shaped (*e-nu)* pebbles (of precious metal) before Gula and five settings (for precious stones (KA) [103] before Uraš; *ku-pa-ni* looks like a masc. pl. which suits the context, but its base is not recorded elsewhere. These ornaments were received by Nabû-šuma-iddina from Nabû-šuma-iškun in the presence of Šuma-ukīn s. of Širiktu and Balātu s. of Šūzubu.

1. šá 5 e-nu la-IGI ^{d}ME.ME ad-ma
2. ù 5 KA šá ku-pa-ni
3. ^{d}URAŠ ^{iti}GAN U_4.24.KAM
4. ^{md}+AG-MU-MU ina ŠU^{II}

lo.e. 5. ^{md}+AG-MU-GAR^{un} ina GUB

6. šá ^{m}MU-GIN A-šú šá

rev. 7. ^{m}ši-rik-tu$_4$ u ^{m}TI[N]
8. A-šú šá ^{m}šu⌝-⌜zu-bu
9. ma-hir⌝ [^{iti}]GAN
10. U_4.25.KA[M MU].1.KAM

u.e. 11. ^{d}U.GUR-LUGAL-ÙRU

12 (almost centred). LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

2. HAM 73.2907 – 44 x 38 x 16 mm.; Dilbat, archive of E-ibbi-Anu (Bēlet-ekalli), 19.IX.10 Nbn. = 545 BCE; promissory note for barley.

1. 1 BÁN 4 SÌLA ŠE.BAR SAG.DU
2. [š]á ^{d}GAŠAN šá ina ŠU^{II} ^{f}ti-ba (or ma)-a-tu$_4$ NIN?-šú
3. šá ^{fd}⌜NIN⌟.⌜LÍL-mu?-šar?-DINGIR^{me}
4. [Š]E.BAR TIL-tú 1 ⌜BÁN⌟ [4 SÌLA a-n]a KASKAL^{II}
5. šá UGU ^{md}la-ga-ma-al-MU
6. u ^{f}be-let-šú DAM-šú
7. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ a-na 1 GUR 1 (PI) 4 BÁN ŠE.BAR
8. <<ŠE.BAR (on e.)>> gam-mir-ti ina dil-bat^{ki}
9. ina KÁ ka-lak-ka

lo.e. 10. i-nam-din-nu 1+en pu-ut

11. šá-ni-i na-šu-ú e-lat
12. 4 SÌLA ŠE.GIŠ.Ì i-nam-din-nu (all eroded)

rev. 13. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}kal-ba-a
14. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-MU-DÙ A ^{m}šá-⌜du⌟-nu
15. ^{md}UTU-MU A ^{md}+AG-DÙ-NUMUN

(space)

16. ⌜u ^{lú}⌟UMBISAG ^{m}EN-šú-nu A-šú šá
17. ⌜^{md}+AG-MU-ŠEŠ dil-bat^{ki}
18. ^{iti}GAN U_4.20 1 LAL.KAM
19. [M]U.10.KAM ^{md}+AG-I LUGAL E^{ki}

u.e. 20. [^{f}]⌜$_{\text{L}}$^{d}ba-ú-HU-É DUMU.MUNUS-su [šá]
21. [^{md}UR]AŠ?-TIN^{it} pu-ut e-ṭe-ru
22. [(x)]⌜na-šá-a-ta

Translation

> 0;0.1.4 kor of barley, original amount, of Bēltu which is in the hands of (i.e. administered by) Tibātu? (or Timātu?) sis.? of Mulliltu -mu?-šar?-ilī. The barley, 0;0.1.4 kor as full payment, is for a business partnership; (it is) charged against Lā-gamal-iddina and Bēlessu his wife. In month II it will accrue 0;1.4 kor of barley per kor (i.e. 33.33% interest). They will deliver the full amount in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo). Each assumes guaranty for the other. Besides, they will deliver 0;0.0.4 kor of sesame.

Witnesses: Kalbâ /Nabû-šuma-ibni //Šadûnu and Šamaš-iddina /Nabû-bāni-zēri; and the scribe Bēlšunu /Nabû-šuma-uṣur; Dilbat, date.

Postscript: ^{f}Bau-HU-bīti d. of Uraš?-uballiṭ assumes guaranty for the payment.

Remark

2. Bēltu is presumably short for Bēlet-ekalli, in which case the property belongs to the E-ibbi-Anu temple complex. It is interesting that a female acts as business agent of a temple. Another female acts a a guarantor here. Was it due to the fact that the shrine was of a goddess? An analogous case is the property of the goddess Mulliltu which was also administered by a female (below, 1.3.3.2, 8); another female administered the property of [Ištar ?] of Dilbat according to 1.3.3.4, 6 below where the guarantor was a female as well.

3. HAM 73.2873 – 49 x 38 x 18 mm.; Dilbat, 4(or 5?).II.2 Dar. I = 520 BCE; promissory note for barley, estimated yield, and green stalk of barley.

1. 4 GUR 4 PI ŠE.BAR ZAG.LU šá É
2. ÈŠ AN LI (or US?) ERIM šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+URAŠ A-šú šá
3. ^{md}+URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN A ^{m}mu-ban-mu (*sic*)-ú
4. 6 GUR ŠE.BAR šá U_4?.25 NÍG.GA ^{d}+URAŠ
5. LUGAL ki[š-š]á-tu$_4$ šá ^{md}+URAŠ-MU-GIN A-šú šá
6. ^{m}TIN ina U[G]U^{hi} ^{m}ni-din-⌜tú⌟ A-šú šá ^{md}+EN⌟-⌜KÁD⌟
7. A ^{m}šá-MUN$^{hi.a}$-šú ina ^{iti}SIG$_4$ ŠE.BAR
8. ga-mir-tu$_4$ ina É ^{m}ni-din-tú

lo.e. 9. ina ma-ši-hu šá 1 PI ina dil-bat^{ki}

10. ŠE.BAR-2 11 GUR ù ⌜11⌟ GUR
11. ma-ak-ṣa-ri šá ti-IN⌝.[NU]

rev. 12. ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din << ^{lú}m[u-kin-nu]
13. e-lat 3 BÁN a-ba-ah-šin-nu>> $^{l[ú}$m]u-kin-nu
14. ^{md}+AG-EN-šú-nu A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-DA
15. ^{m}haš-da-A+A A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-KÁD
16. A ^{m}ša-MUN$^{hi.a}$-šú ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}MU-^{d}URAŠ
17. A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut A $^{m⌜}$ir-a-nu ^{uru}dil-b[at^{k}]^{i}

[100] For the relationship between the Babylonian temples and private individuals in the mid-1st millennium BCE see Joannès 2000.
[101] See Jursa 2010:159 with n. 897.
[102] Cf. Jursa 2005: 100, n. 729, and Waerzeggers 2010: 30 with n. 177.
[103] See CAD I/J, s.v. *īnu* 3; K: 470b, s.v. *pû*, 10.

18. ^{iti}GU$_4$ (squeezed) U$_4$.⌜4? (or 5?).KA[M] MU.2.KAM
19. ^{m}da-a-ri-mu-šu LUGAL E[^{ki}]
u.e. 20. LUGAL KUR.KUR$^{me[š]}$
le.e. 21. e-lat 3 BÁN a-ba-ah-šin-nu
22. [šá ina UGU]-šú

Translation

> 4;4 kors of barley, estimated yield of GN of (= administered by) Iddin-Uraš s. of Uraš-kīn-zēri desc. of Mubannû; (and) six kors of barley of the 25th day?, property of Uraš, King of the universe, of (= administered by) Uraš-šuma-ukīn s. of Balāṭu, are charged against Nidintu s. of Bēl-kāṣir desc. of Ša-ṭābtišu. In month III he will deliver the barley as full payment in Nidintu's house, in one *pānu*-measure in Dilbat (namely) the aforementioned barley, 11 kors, and 11 kors of straw in Dilbat.

Witnesses: Nabû-bēlšunu /Nabû-lē'i and Hašdāyu /Bēl-kāṣir //Ša-ṭābtīšu, br. of Nidintu (the debtor); and the scribe Iddin-Uraš /Rēmūtu //Ir'anni;

Dilbat, date.

Postscript: Apart from 0;0.3 kor of green stalk of barley (*abahšinnu)* which are charged against him.

Remarks

1f. - This microtoponym seems to be originally a name of a shrine. It is not listed (*si vera lectio*) in George, *Temples*.

8. Exceptionally the delivery takes place in the debtor's and not in the house of the creditor (or of his representative in this case).

10f. One would expect 10;4 kors, the total of the two quantities of barley enumerated in lines 1 and 4 above. It may be that the scribe forgot to insert 1 PI after 6 GUR in line 4. The scribe was careless in view of the redundant lines 12b-13a, where he probably intended to start the witnesses list: he repeats the *elât-* clause at the end, where such clauses are often placed (as postscripts).

13, 21. *a-ba-ah-šin-nu* denotes "green stalk of barley" according to context. The more so since it occurs together with *qayātu* "parched grain."[104] – A survival thereof is OSyr. *bwḥšyn(')* "green herbs, stalks", i.e. with aphaeresis; *-w-* is compatible with the Assyrian vocalization, viz. MA *a-bu-uh-ši-*[*nu*(*-um*)] and NA (with progressive vowel assimilation) *ú-<bu->uh-šen-nu*.[105] This is expected as Old Syriac was spoken on former Assyrian territory and adjacent regions. Is JBA *'b(y)š(w/y)n'* ("roasted ears of grain")[106] also a survival of *abahšinnu* (with weakening of the guttural which is a common phenomenon in Eastern Aramaic)? The rendering of *'bšyn'* as "roasted ears of grain" relies on Gaonic commentaries. Given the considerable chronological gap, it may be with a secondary semantic development. This development might have been enhanced by the absence of a survival of *qayātu* "parched grain" in Aramaic.

4. Sandowicz 2019: 164–171:45= BM 47423 – Dilbat, 7.I.6 Dar. I = 516 BCE.[107] What follows heavily relies on Sandowicz's extensive, elaborate and penetrating analysis of this deed, which records the proceedings of the release of Bēl-iddina (^{d}+EN-MU). The latter was the son of Ubāru (ú-bar)/Bunānu (bu-na-nu), an oblate of Marduk. His mother, Kūtāyu (^{f}ku-ut-ta-A+<A>), who lived on the urban property (GI^{meš} = *qanâti* or *qanê*) of Nabû-zēra-iqīša (^{d}+AG-NUMUN-BA^{šá})/Kīn-zēri (GIN-NUMUN), helped him to escape. He was caught about three years earlier (in 3 Dar. I) and put under a sort of house arrest under the custody of Marduk-šuma-uṣur (^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU-ÙRU)/Uraš-zēra-ibni (^{d}URAŠ-NUMUN-DÙ)//Ea-ēpeš-ilī (^{d}IDIM-DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR) by four Dilbatean officials, viz. Uraš-kāṣir (^{d}URAŠ-KÁD), the governor (*šakin-ṭēmi*), Niqūdu (ni-qu-du), his deputy (*šanû*),[108] Kalbi-Bau (kal-bi-^{d}ba-ú), the *bēl-qa-an-na-a-*⌜*tú*⌝, and Nādinu (na-din), the "policeman" (*pa-qu-du*). They are clearly arranged by hierarchy. Bēl-iddina's father, who was presumably based in the capital of Babylon, obtained a letter from Baga-pānu, an Iranian, very probably a high official there, requesting from the chief administrator (*šatammu*) of E-ibbi-Anu, Mušēzib-Marduk (KAR-^{d}AMAR.UTU) the release of Bēl-iddina. The case was brought by the chief administrator before an assembly of free citizens of Dilbat, comprising of seven members, all surnamed except for the last one who bears – like the other members – a purely Akkadian filiation. This implies that not only members of urban clans belonged to the class of free citizens:

> Uraš-kīn-apli (^{d}URAŠ-GIN-⌜IBILA⌝)/Mušēzib-Bēl (KAR-^{d}+EN)//Itinnu (^{lú}ŠITIM); Nabû-bullissu (^{d}+AG-bu-ul-liṭ-su)/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi (^{d}+AG-TIN-su-iq-bi)//Bā'iru (^{lú}ŠU.KU$_6$); Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-MU)/Nabû-ēṭir -napšāti (^{d}+AG-KAR-ZI^{meš})//Maṣṣar-abulli (^{lú}EN.⌜NUN.KÁ⌝.GAL); Nabû-ahhē (^{d}+AG-⌜ŠEŠ^{meš}⌝)-[x]/Marduk-šuma-uṣur (^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU-ÙRU)//Adad--šuma-uṣur (^{d}IŠKUR-MU-⌜ÙRU⌝); Nidinti-Bēl (ni-din-tu$_4$-^{d}+EN)//Bēl-ahhē-erība (^{d}+EN-ŠEŠ^{meš}-SU)//Bā'iru (^{lú}ŠU.KU$_6$); Nabû-šuma-uṣur (⌜^{d}⌝+AG⌜⌝-MU-⌜ÙRU⌝)//Gimillu (⌜gi⌝-mil-⌜lu⌝)//Dābibī (da-bi-bi); and Andahar (an-da-har)/Nabû-ēṭir (^{d}+AG-SUR).

It stands to reason that the deliberations by the Dilbatean authorities were merely formal, seeing that the release was dictated by an official of the imperial Achaemenid government. The scribe is Marduk-šuma-iddina (^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU-MU)/Šadûnu (šá-du-nu)//Sîn-šadûnu (^{d}XXX-šá-⌜du⌝-[nu]).

[104] E.g., Moldenke 2, 62, 2 (NB), cf. CAD Q: 54, s.v. *qajātu*.
[105] CAD A/1: 3a, s.v. *abahšinnu*, b, c with refs.
[106] Sokoloff 2020: 7b, s.v. *'bšwn'*.
[107] An exemplary edition.
[108] An earlier deputy of Dilbat (^{lú}II-*ú šá dil-bat^{ki}*) is Šamaš-zēra-ibni (dUTU-NUMUN-DÙ)/Rēmūt-Gula (2re-mut-dgu-la) who acted as the first witness in a deed from Dilbat, -.XI.40 Nbk. II = 564 BCE (BM 49614, 1f.).

1.3.1.2. Private archives

The largest archive (Ea-qarrād-ilī) is listed first. It contains 26 documents which are arranged in chronological order (598–544 BCE and without date).[109] Each of the other 17 recognizable archives contains only one document. The 17 archives are arranged after the archive of Ea-qarrād-ilī in alphabetic order. Several archives are linked to the E-ibbi-Anu temple: no less than ten deeds of the largest archive, all concerning estimated yield (*imittu*), record payment of tithe to the temple ("tithe of Uraš ", below, 1.3.1.2.1, 8–10, 12, 14–16, 21, 24, 25).[110] The same applies to two such deeds belonging of small archives and one unassignable deed of the Dailem collection (below, 1.3.1.2.4, 1.3.1.2.15 and 1.3.3.1, 5). Both the tithe and the share of Uraš were paid according to a promissory note for unripened dates as impost (*ṣibtu*) from a palm grove on Harruša-Uraš (below, 1.3.1.2.14). The parties are members of Šangû-Dilbat and Rab-banê, clans with strong ties to the E-ibbi-Anu temple. For a doubtful occurrence of the same tithe see above, 1.1.2 *ad* OECT 10, 73 (probably also an estimated yield). It seems that property of the temple was sold to a private individual, which would be exceptional, but the background is not clear as the deed of sale is damaged (below, 1.3.1.2.18).

1.3.1.2.1. The archive of Ea-qarrād-ilī

The main protagonist, Zērīya /Zākiru //E., also acted via his agents and slaves (e.g., BM 103628 below, 2). Therefore, it is not easy to identify all the documents belonging to his archive. [111]

1. MLC 523 (Figure 1) - brown, 50x39x23mm.; cf. photograph; Dilbat, 15.VIII.7 Nbk. II = 598 BCE; promissory note for barley and silver.

1. [x+?] MAŠ MA.NA ⌜5⌟ 1/2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR SAG. DU x⌟ [...]
2. ⌜ù 10 GUR 1 PI ŠE.BAR SAG.DU [šá]
3. ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}G[U_4-DINGIR^{meš}]
4. [ina] UGU ^{md}URAŠ-BA^{šá} A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-ŠEŠ-MU
5. [A] ^{m}šu-n[u]-dan-nu KÙ.BABBAR a-na UGU 1 ⌜ma-[né-e]
6. 10 GÍN KÙ.BA[BBAR] ina UGU^{hi}-šú i-rab-bi
7. [Š]E.BAR a-na UGU 1 GUR 1 PI ina UGU[^{hi}-šú]
8. [t]a-rab-bi ^{fd}NIN.LÍL-ha-⌜x⌟ [u?]
9. [^{f}]^{d}NIN.LÍL-GAL-ta-lim? ⌜x⌟ [x (x)]
10. [xxx(x) ^{m}] ^{d}+AG-A-PAP LUGAL TI[N.T]IR[^{ki}]
11. [...^{m}]NUMUN-ia ⌜ad⌟?-x⌟ [x(x)]
12. [...x+?] 1 GUR UGU ^{m}ba-la-ṭ[u...]
13. [maš-k]a-nu šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia ^{lú}TUK-ú
14. [šá]-nam-m[a] ina UGU ul i-šal-laṭ
15. [a-d]i ^{m}NUM[UN-i]a KÙ.BABBAR-šú i-šal-li-m[u]
16. ⌜⌞ú-ìl-tì[^{meš} IG]I^{meš} šá KÙ.BABBAR u ŠE.BAR hi-p[a]-⌜a⌟-[ta]
17. [^{lú}mu]-kin-ni [^{m}]⌜^{d}]la-ga-ma-al-na-[din?-(x)]
18. [A]-šú šá ^{m}MU-a [A ^{m}]⌜^{d}IDIM-im-bi-an-ni?
19. [^{m}]EN-šú-nu A⌟-[šú] ⌜⌞šá ^{md}+AG-DÙ A ^{md}+EN-e-[ṭè?-ru?]
20. ^{md}+AG-S[UR]? A-šú šá ^{m}e-rib?-x⌟ [(xx)]
21. ⌜u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-SUM^{na}-ŠEŠ A-šú šá ^{m}Ì[R?-x(x)]

u.e. 22. A ^{md}+EN-e⌟-[ṭè]-ru dil-bat^{ki}
23. ^{iti}APIN U_4.15.KAM MU.7.KAM
24. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-⌜PAP⌟ LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

> [x+?] 35.5 shekels of silver, original sum, and 10;1 kors of barley, original amount, belonging to Zērīya s. of Zākiru desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Uraš-iqīša s. of Bēl-aha-iddina desc. of Šunu-dannu. (concerning) the silver, one mina will accrue ten shekels of silver interest (and as for) the barley one kor will accrue 0;1 kor interest. Mulliltu -ha-⌜x⌟ [and?] Mulliltu-GAL-ta-lim? .... Nabû-apla-uṣur King of Babylon [...] Zērīya ...One kor charged against Balāṭu ... is/are pledged on behalf of Zērīya (lit. is/are Zērīya's pledge). No other creditor shall exercise control over it until Zērīya has been paid his silver in full. The previous promissory notes of silver and barley are cancelled (lit. broken).
>
> Witnesses: Lā-gamal-nā[din?-x]/ Šumâ //Ea-imbiani?, Bēlšunu /Nabû-ibni //Bēl-eṭēru?, Nabû-ēṭir?/Erīb?-[xxx], and the scribe Nabû-nādin-ahi / Ar[di?-x(x)] //Bēl-eṭēru; Dilbat, date.

Remark

8-12. There seems to be a reference to an earlier transaction from Nabopolassar's time, i.e. at least seven years earlier.

Comment

The interest rate is 16.66% on the silver and 20% on the barley.

This is the earliest document of the Ea-qarrād-ilī archive (Zērīya /Zākiru), which hithero was not recorded before 25 Nbk. II.[112]

[109] BM 103686 from 576 BCE has a homonym of the protagonist Zērīya, but without a filiation. Therefore it is classified for the time being as unassignable (below, 1.3.3.2, 4).
[110] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 729 (a partial list).
[111] See Jursa 2005: 99–100:7.4.2 (cf. 2010: 202–203).
[112] See Jursa 2005: 99–100:7.4.2.

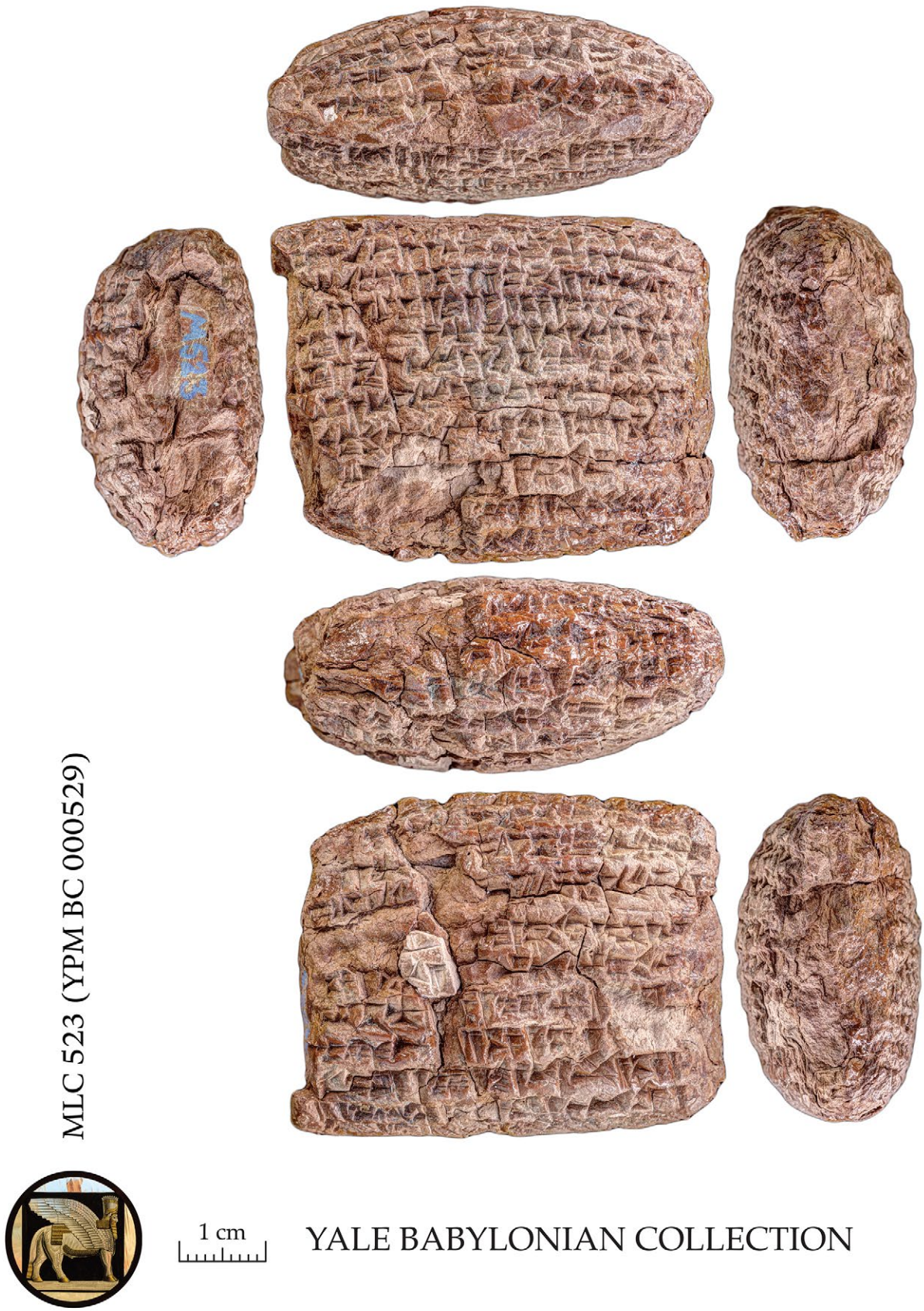

Figure 1. MLC 523 (© Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection)

2. BM 103628 – blackish; Dilbat,[113] 10.I.25 [Nbk. II] = 580 BCE; promissory note for silver; cf. BM 103607.

1. 5/6 MA.NA KÙ.B[ABBAR šá ^{m}xx A-šú šá]
2. ^{md}URAŠ-bu-di-<<ki->>ia⌋ ÌR
3. šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-ki[r]
4 (indented). A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR$^{me[š]}$
5. ina UGU ^{md}URAŠ-EN-a-ni A¬-[šú šá]
6. ^{md}la-ga-ma-al-DÙ$^{u[š]}$
7 (indented). A ^{m}hu-pi-i[a?]
8. ina ⌜^{iti}⌟ŠU ⌜i⌟-[nam-din]

lo.e. 9. entirely destroyed (apparently no more than 1 line)

rev. 1'. ^{m}x⌟[...] (presumably PN$_1$ A-šú šá PN$_2$)
2' (indented). A ^{md}+AG-⌜A⌟?-[...]
3'. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}URAŠ-EN-[a-ni]
4'. A ^{md}la-ga-ma-[a]l-⌜DÙ⌟^{uš}
5'. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}BÁR U$_4$.10.[KAM]
6'. MU.25.KAM [^{d}+AG-...]
7'. LUGAL TIN.T[IR^{ki}]

Translation

5/6 mina of silver of [xx] s. of Uraš-būdīya, slave of Zērīya s. of Zākiru desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Uraš-bēlāni s. of Lā-gamal-īpuš desc. of Hupīya?. In month IV he will repay.

'. x [...](/[...])//Nabû-apla?-[...], the only discernible witness, and the scribe Uraš-bēl[āni]/Lā-gamal-īpuš; Dilbat, date.

Remark

Rev. 3'f. Scribe = debtor.

3. BM 103483 – obv. almost entirely effaced; Dilbat, 14.I.30 Nbk. II = 575 BCE; fragment of a deed

lo.e. 1. e-lat 2/3 GÍN ⌜KÙ.BABBBAR [šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia/iá]
rev. 2. A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir šá UGU^{hi} ^{m}na-di[n ...]
3. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}MU-ŠEŠ A-šú šá ^{m}DUB-NU[MUN]
4. A ^{m}bu-ú-ṣu ^{m}šu-la-a A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-BA[^{šá}?]
5. A ^{lú}ŠU.KU$_6$ ^{m}na-din A-šú šá ^{m}a-hat-ib-šú
6. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}UTU-GIN-IBILA A-šú šá ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-⌜š[u]-⌜ú⌟
7. A ^{lú}GAL ba-né-e dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}BÁR
8. U$_4$.14.KAM MU.30.KAM ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU
9. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

Apart from 40 shekels of silver of [Zērīya] s. of Zākiru which are charged against Nādinu.

Witnesses: Šuma-uṣur /Šāpik-zēri //Būṣu, Šulâ /Nabû-iqīša //Bā'iru, Nādinu /Ahāt-ibšu; and the scribe: Šamaš-kīn-apli /Ša-Nabû-šū //Rab- banê; Dilbat, date.

4. BM 103605 – Dilbat, 12.XI.30 Nbk. II = 574 BCE; promissory note for barley as an exchange for dates

1. 1 GUR 2 (PI) 2 BÁN ŠE.BAR ina šu-pel-tu$_4$ šá¬ ZÚ.LUM.MA
2. šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir A ^{md}IDIM(text GU$_4$)-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{f}a-si-il-tu$_4$
4. DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{md}+AG-APIN^{eš} ina ^{iti}ŠU
5. ŠE.BAR gam-mir-tu$_4$ ina dil-bat^{ki}
6. ina KÁ ka-lak-ku ta-nam-din

rev. 7. ^{lú}m[u-k]in-nu ^{md}+AG-KAR-ZI^{meš}
8. A-šú šá ^{md}a-nù-DÙ^{uš}
9. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-A-MU dil-bat^{ki}
10. ^{iti}ZÍZ U$_4$.12.KAM MU.30.KAM
11. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ú-ṣur

u.e. 12. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

1;2.2 kor of barley exchanged for dates of Zēriya s. of Zākiru desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Asiltu d. of Nabû-ēreš. She will deliver the barley, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo) in month IV.

Witness Nabû-ēṭir -napšāti /Anu-īpuš and the scribe Nabû-apla-iddina; Dilbat, date.

5. BM 103593 – script resembles that of BM 103575; Dilbat, 16.II.33 Nbk. II = 572 BCE; promissory note for silver.

1. ⌜1 xxx GÍ[N KÙ.BABBAR]
2. 1+et hi-in-du ri-ik-s[u? ...]
3. ga-aṣ-ab-ba-tú šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia ⌜A⌟-[šú]
4. šá ^{m}za-kir A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR^{meš}
5. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}ba-ni-iá A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-M[U? < or D[Ù?>]
6. A ^{m}MU-^{d}IDIM ina qí-it ITI
7. šá ^{iti}AB i-nam-din ki-i la it-tan-nu
8. mu-šah-hi-in šá a-ki¬ 4? MAŠ A+A AN?

lo.e. 9 (inserted in tiny script). šá ^{m}DÙ-ia x ⌜x⌟ [...]
10. šak-na-ta i-na-áš-am-[ma]
11. a-na ^{m}NUMUN-ia i-nam-din

rev. 12. É ^{lú}MU maš-ka-nu ^{lú}TUK-ú ⌜šá-n[am-ma?]
13. ina UGU^{hi} ul i-šal-laṭ a-di ^{m}NUMUN-iá
14. mu-šah-hi-nu i-šal-lim-mu ^{lú}mu-kin-ni
15. ^{md}XXX-MU A-šú šá ^{m}la-qí-pi
16. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}IDIM-MU A-šú šá ^{md}AMAR.UTU-⌜x⌟ [...]
17. A ^{m}⌜a⌟?-gi-[ri?]
18. dil-bat^{ki} $^{it[i]}$ GU$_4$ U$_4$.16.KAM

[113] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 724; 2010: 402, 2309.

u.e. 19. ⌜MU.36.K[AM ^{d}+A]G-NÍG-DU-Ù[RU LUGAL E^{ki}]
le.e. 20. ina IGI ^{md}+AG-KÁD

Translation

1+x shekel(s) of silver in a ... leather bag, belonging to Zērīyas. of Zākiru desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Bānīya s. of Nabû-zēra-iddina ? (or ibni?) desc. of Iddin-Ea. He will repay it at the end of month X. If he does not repay, he will bring a cooking vessel (*mušahhinu)* of 4.5? x (capacity or weight?), which is deposited with Bānīya..., and give (it) to Zērīya. The bakery (lit. "the baker's house") is pledged. No other creditor shall exercise control over it until Zērīya is compensated for the cooking vessel in full.

Witnesses: Sîn -iddina /Lā-qīpu and Nabû-kāṣir (an additional w. "in the presence of N."); and the scribe Ea-iddina /Marduk-⌜x⌟ [...]//Āgiru?. Dilbat, date.

Remarks

3. *ga-aṣ-ab-ba-tú* seems to be an adjective referring to the preceding substantives (fem.). It is not attested elsewhere. Perhaps it derives from Aram. Q-Ṣ-B "to determine, limit" which is recorded in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, in which case it would be with dissimilation of emphatics (*q-* > *g-* due to */ṣ/*), a common phenomenon in Eastern Aramaic from Mesopotamia. The denotation here is not clear.

12. It seems that the debtor was a baker. Akkadian terms for bakery are *bīt-āpê* and *bīt-kunni*.[114]

6. BM 103518 – crème, apparently horizontally oriented, 61 x 32[+x (over 50%)] x 18 mm.; [Dilbat], -.-.34 Nbk. II = 571/0 BCE; promissory note for silver for bow-tax[115]

1. [x M]A.NA KÙ.BABBAR šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú ⌜šá ^{m}[za-kir]
2. ⌜⌞A⌟ ^{md}IDIM-DINGIR.GU$_4$-DINGIR^{meš} ina UGU ^{md}+AG-M[U-DÙ A-šú šá]
3. ^{m}lu-^{d}+AG-KAM A ^{m}bi-ri (text EN) -na-A+A KÙ.BABBAR pu-ut 4^{ú}
4. šá ka-re-e ^{lú}BAN-šú-nu šá ^{md}+AG-MU-DÙ
5. šá ul-tu ^{iti}GU$_4$ MU.33.KAM a-⌜di ^{i}[^{ti}x šá]
6. MU.34.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.T[IR^{ki}]
7. šá DUB?.ID^{meš} ^{m}NUMUN-ia⌟ ⌜i⌟-[....]
8. traces [..]

remainder broken away

u.e. 1. [... ^{d}+AG]-NÍG.DU-ÙRU[...]

Translation

[x] mina(s) of silver of Zērīya s. of [Zākiru] desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Nabû-šuma-ibni s. of Lū-Nabû-ēreš desc. of Birināyu. The silver is for one-quarter of their common bow-tax due from Nabû-šuma-ibni (for the period) from II.33 until [month x].34 of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon of (-according to?) the tablet? of Zērīya.

7. BM 103462 - place not mentioned (Dilbat in view of l. 6), - V.35 Nbk. II = 570 BCE; adm. (silver and dates)

1. KÙ.BABBAR ù ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-⌜DÙ A-šú [šá ^{m}xx]
2. ina ŠU^{II} ^{lú}hal?-qí^{meš} ^{lú}ki-zu-ú^{meš} iš-šu-ú⌟
3. ^{iti}IZI MU.35.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TIR[^{ki}]
4. 4 MAŠ GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ina ŠU^{II} ^{md}+AG-GIN-A UGU^{hi} A^{meš} šá ^{m}šu-zu-[bu]
5. 3 MAŠ GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}A-a u ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN A^{meš} šá ^{m}šu-la⌟-⌜a⌟
6. ⌜4⌟ [+1?] GÍN ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}GIN-A u ^{md}URAŠ-MU-ŠEŠ A^{meš} šá ^{md}+AG-[...]
7. ⌜2⌟+[x] ⌜MAŠ⌟ GÍN ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}ÌR-iá A-šú šá ^{m}[x]-⌜x⌟
8. [x] GÍN ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}ṣil-la-a A-šú šá ^{m}⌜šu⌟?-l[a]?-⌜a?
9. [x] GÍN ^{m}ki-rib-ti A-šú šá ^{m}mar-[duk(-a)]
10. [x] ⌜x ^{md}+AG-DA ⌜A-šú šá ^{md}x⌝ [...]

lo.e. 11. ⌜7 GÍN [...]

rev. 12. ⌜x LUM x⌟ (not MA!)[...]
13. [3+?] 2 GUR šá [...]
14. 3 GUR la-IGI [...]
15. 2 GUR la-IGI [...]
16. 2 GUR la-IGI ^{m}šá-red A-⌜šú šá ^{m}[...]
17. 2 GUR la-IGI ^{m}⌜ma⌟-di-ìlu A-šú šá ^{m}x⌟ (AŠ +x, e.g. DINGIR, la)-[...]
18. 1 GUR šá IGI la(!) [^{m}x]⌜x⌟-⌜^{d}+EN⌟ A-šú šá ^{m}x⌟[..]
19. 1 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA 1+en ^{giš}GIŠIMMAR la-IGI ^{f}in?-[...]
20. [x GU]R 3 PI la-IGI ^{f}ra-mu-ú-a D[AM...]

u.e. 21. 5 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR šá ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}ba-la-ṭu ⌜A⌟ [...]
22. [...] (erasure) iš-š[u-ú]

Translation

Superscription: silver and dates which Nabû-zēra-ibni s. of [xx] brought from the fugitives? and the guards;[116] month V, 35th year of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon;

[114] See Waerzeggers 2010: 213.
[115] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 728; 2010: 202.
[116] For *kizû* see Bongenaar, NB *Ebabbar* : 95–96 and Jursa 2005: 100 with 727.

(**a**) 4.5 shekels of silver from Nabû-kīn-apli charged against the (anonymous) sons of Šūzubu;
(**b**) 3.5 shekels of silver from Aplâ and Ardi-Bēl sons of Šulâ;
(**c**) 4 [+1?] shekels of silver from Kīn-apli and Uraš-šuma-uṣur (or -nādin-ahi) sons of Nabû-[...];
(**d**) 2 [+x] shekels of silver from Ardīya s. of [x]-x;
(**e**) [x] shekel(s) of silver from Ṣillâ s. of Šulâ ?;
(**f**) [x] shekel(s) of silver from Kiribtu s. of Mar[duk(â)?];
(**g**) [Sum of silver from?] Nabû-lē'i s. of [DN-...];
(**h**) Seven shekels [of silver...];
(**i**) x [...];
(**j**) [3+?]2 kors [...];
(**k**) Three kors at the disposal of [...];
(**l**) Two kors at the disposal of [...];
(**m**) Two kors at the disposal of Šarēdu s. of [...];
(**n**) Two kors of dates at the disposal of Mādi-ilu s. of x-[...];
(**o**) One kor of dates at the disposal of [xx]-Bēl s. of x [...];
(**p**) One kor of dates (of?) one date palm at the disposal of ^{f}In?-[...];
(**q**) [x];3 kor(s) of dates at the disposal of Ramūa wi. of? [...];
(**r**) Five shekels of silver which were brought from Balāṭu s. of [...].

8. BM 103475 – damaged; Dilbat, 10[+x].VI.35 Nbk. II = 570 BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield[117]

1. 2 GUR 1 PI ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. 5 ma-ši-hu 1 GUR e-lat eš-ru-ú
3. šá ^{d}URAŠ A.ŠÀ šá ^{m}na-din A-šú šá
4. ^{m}a-hat-ib-šú e-lat-šú šá KI a-ha-meš
5. šá ^{d}URAŠ šá ^{rmd}+AG-NUMUN-MU A-šú [šá ^{m}xx]
7. ina UG[U(^{hi}) ^{m}...]
8. gam-ru-t[u ...]
9. ina ma-ši-hu ina É.[^{md}+AG-NUMUN-MU]
lo.e. 10. ^{r}A-šú šá ^{m}x.[... i-nam-din]
11. ^{lú}mu-[kin-nu/ni]
rev. 12. ^{m}ŠEŠ-it-tab-ši.([...])
13. A-šú šá ^{m}na-din u ^{lú}U[MBISAG ...]
14. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}KIN U_4.10+[x.KAM]
15. MU.35.KAM
16. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

2;1 kors of dates, estimated yield, at the rate of five *mašīhu*-s per one kor, apart from the tithe of Uraš, (from) the field of Nādinu s. of Ahāt-ibšu, apart from that which is jointly of Uraš, belonging to Nabû-zēra-iddina s. of [xx] charged against [PN...]. [In month x he will deliver the dates], full amount, [...] in the measure in the house [of Nabû-zēra-iddina] s. of x[...].

Witness: Aha-ittabši /Nādinu and the scribe [...]; Dilbat, date.

Remark

4f. Perhaps referring to a plot which is shared with Uraš (the E-ibbi-Anu temple).

9. PTS 2373 – brown, 54 x 38 x 20 mm.; effaced in several points. Dilbat, 26.VI.35 Nbk. II = 570 BCE;[118] promissory note for dates, estimated yield

1. 30 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU KÁ šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN
2. u ŠEŠ^{meš}-šú A^{meš} šá ^{m}hu (or re?)-^{r}x (both signs eroded) e-lat É maš-ka-nu
3. šá ^{m}ha-ra-nu 5 G[UR? ^{m}ku?-n]a^{r}?-a A-šú šá
4. ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šú-ú ^{rlú}?x^{r} ^{r}x ^{l}šá^{r}? ^{m}DÙ-ia
5. A-šú šá ^{m}šu-ma-a PAP ^{r}3[5 GU]R Z]Ú.LUM.MA
6. ZAG.LU šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-M[U A-šú šá] ^{rm}A-a
7. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}pir-› A-šú šá ^{md}?[x (x)] -^{r}$_{l}$gu?
8. A ^{lú}SANGA dil-bat^{ki} ^{m}MU-[x(x)] ^{r}A-šú [š]á
9. ^{m}kab-ti-ia A ^{m}[x x] ^{r}x.
lo.e. 10. ina ^{iti}DU_6 ZÚ.LUM.[MA] gam-ru-tu
11. ina dil-bat^{ki} ina KÁ ka-[l]ak-^{r}ku$_{l}$
rev. 12. ina ma-ši-hu šá 1 PI 1 BÁN 1 SÌLA i-maš-šah
13. ^{m}ru-du-a A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-na-di-nu ku-^{r}um
14. na-še-e pu-tú šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia ^{md}PA-MU-DÙ^{r}?
15. u ^{md}la-ga-ma-al-SUR pu-ut na-šu-ú
16. i-nam-din-nu 1+en pu-ut 2-i na-šu-ú
17. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ e-lat
18. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}MU-GIN A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-ka-ṣir
19. ^{m}bul-ṭa-a A-šú šá ^{m}A-a ^{m}ni-qu-du
20. A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}pir-› A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-iá
u.e. 21. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}KIN U_4.26.KAM MU.35.KAM
22. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

30 kors of dates, estimated yield, instalment of Ardi-Bēl and his brothers sons of Hu (or Re?)- ^{r}x apart from the pledged land of Harānu; five kors? of [Kun]â? s. of Ša-Nabû-šū x (dependent, functionary or representative) of Bānīya s. of Šumâ. Total of 3[5 kors] of dates, estimated yield of Nabû-zēra-iddina [s. of] Aplâ charged against Pir'u s. of [DN?-x]-gu? desc. of Šangû-Dilbat (and) MU-[x(x)] s. of Kabtīya desc. of [x x]^{r}x.. In month VII they (text 'he') will measure the dates, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo) in the measure of 0;1.1.1 kor (and) deliver (them). Rudūa s. of Uraš-nādinu assumes guarantee for Zērīya, Nabû-šuma-ibni and

[117] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 727, 729; 2010: 402 with 2309.

[118] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 727.

Lā-gamal-ēṭir. Each assumes guaranty for the other. Apart for the tithe of Uraš.

Witnesses: Šuma-ukīn /Uraš-kāṣir, Bulṭâ/ Aplâ, Niqūdu /Zērīya, and the scribe Pir›u /Zērīya; Dilbat, date.

Remark

16. *i-nam-din-nu* should have followed *i-maš-šah*(*-ma*) at the end of line 12.

10. BM 103638 – Dilbat, 15.VI.36 Nbk. II = 569 BCE;[119] promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 3 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. 2-ta KÀ^{meš} ^{m}na-din A-šú šá
3. ⌜^{md}⌟+URAŠ⌝?-DA? šá ^{md}+URAŠ-NUMUN-MU
4. [A-šú š]á ⌜^{m}A-a? ina UGU ^{md}UTU-kil-la-an-nu
5. [^{l}ú]r⌟qal-la šá ^{m}mu-šal-lim-^{d}AMAR.UTU
6. ina ^{iti}DU$_6$ ZÚ.LUM.MA gam-ru-tú
7. ina dil-bat^{ki} a-na ^{m}NUMUN-ia

lo.e. 8. A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir i-nam-din

rev. 9. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ e-ṭir
10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN
11. A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
12. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN A-šú šá
13. ^{md}UTU-NUMUN-DÙ dil-bat^{ki}
14. ^{iti}KIN U$_4$.15.KAM MU.36.KAM
15. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU

u.e. 16. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

Three kors of dates, estimated yield of two sectors (of the palm grove), of Nādinus. of Uraš?-lē'i? (administered by) Uraš-zēra-iddina s. of Aplâ ?, charged against Šamaš-killanni slave of Mušallim-Marduk. In month VII he will deliver the dates, full amount, to Zērīya s. of Zākiru in Dilbat. The tithe of Uraš is fully paid.

Witness Ardi-Bēl /Šulâ and the scribe Uraš-kīn-zēri /Šamaš-zēra-ibni; Dilbat, date.

11. Jursa [and Radner] 1995–1996: 108[120] – Dilbat, 20.VI.36 Nbk. II = 569 BCE, promissory note for unripened dates, estimated yield

15;3.2 kors of unripened dates, estimated yield of the irrigated area of Bazīya (^{garim}Ba-zi-iá), the sector from the Euphrates as far as the dike (*kilāti*) of Libluṭ (lib-luṭ)/Nabû-ahhē-bulliṭ ($^{3.d}$+AG-PAP^{meš}-TIN)//Mušēzib-Marduk (mu-še-zib-^{d}AMAR.UTU) $^{4.lú}$SUKKAL ÁŠ LA (or GAL ŠU) EN, creditor; delivery by the debtor Ardi-Gula (ÌR-^{d}gu-la)/Marduk-lūmur ($^{5.d}$AMAR.UTU-IGI)//Šamaš-erība (^{d}UTU-SU) in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo) in month VII.

Witnesses: Lā-gamal-lūmur (^{d}la-ga-mil-IGI)/Nabû-ahhē-bulliṭ ($^{11.d}$+AG-PAP^{me}-TIN), Nuska-nādin-apli (^{d}NUSKA-SUM-A)/Ṣillâ (^{12}ṣil-la-a), and Šēpīt-ṣabat (še-p[it]-ṣab-bat)/Rēmūtu (^{13}re-mut); and the scribe Šulâ (šu-la-a)/Aqar-Bēl (A-qar-^{d}+EN).

12. BM 103575 – Dilbat, 25.VI.36 Nbk. II = 569 BCE; promissory note for dates.[121]

1. 3 GUR 3 PI ZÚ.LUM.MA i-mit-tu$_4$
2. A.ŠÀ šá ^{m}šu-la-a A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-MU-ÙRU
3. u ^{m}ib-na-a A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-na-ṣir
4. šá $^{garim?}$dul-la-pi a-hi ina ŠÀ^{bi}
5. šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-MU A-šú šá ^{m}A-a
6. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}MU-MU A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
7. A ^{lú}BÁHAR ina ^{iti}APIN ZÚ.LUM.M[A]
8. gam-ru-ti ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din

lo.e. 9. ⌜⌟TIL? a-na ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir
10. i-nam-din eš-ru-u šá ^{d}URAŠ e-ṭir (text BI)

rev. 11. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ṣil-la-a
12. A-šú šá ^{m}lib-luṭ A ^{m}mu-SIG$_5^{iq}$
13. ^{md}+AG-EN-DINGIR A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
14. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}ÌR-^{d}AMAR.UTU A-šú
15. šá ^{md}XXX-APIN^{eš} dil-bat^{ki}
16. ^{iti}KIN U$_4$.25.KAM
17. MU.36.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-URÙ

u.e. 18. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

3;3 kors of dates, estimated yield of the field of Šulâ s. of Uraš-šuma-uṣur and Ibnâ s. of Uraš-nāṣir which is (located) within half (of the sector of the irrigated area?) of Dullapu, of (= administered by) Nabû-zēra-iddina s. of Aplâ, are charged against Šuma-iddina (or Nādin-šumi) s. of Šulâ desc. of Pahhāru. In month VIII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat. The tithe of Uraš is fully paid.

Witnesses: Ṣillâ /Libluṭ //Mudammiqu, Nabû-bēl-ili /Šulâ; and the scribe Ardi-Marduk /Sîn -ēreš; Dilbat, date.

13. BM 103590 – obv. damaged; Dilbat, 9.VIII.36 Nbk. II = 569 BCE; apparently a promissory note

1. [x] ⌜xx 4[+x... ^{m}NUMUN-ia/iá]
2. ⌜A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir x⌝ (only DIŠ is preserved) [...]
3. ina UGU ^{m}ta-q[iš ...]
4. ina ^{iti}[x⌝ i⌝- nam-d[in]
5. ki-i ⌜l[a it]-tan-nu ina ^{iti}ZÍZ x⌝ [...]
6. i⌝-⌜nam-din⌝ xxxx-ab-li? [...]

[119] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 729; 2010: 402 with 2309.
[120] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 727.
[121] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 725.

7. pu-ut HA.LA 1 BÁN a¬-⌜n[a ...]
8. ^{m}ta-qiš ⌜ú⌟-[...]
rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}ina-BA (or MA)-ŠU-⌜ina¬+[x ...]
10. A-šú šá ^{m}ṣil-la-a ^{m}NUMUN-DÙ A-[šú šá]
11. ^{md}+AG-PAP ^{m}ba-la-ṭu A-⌜šú⌟ [šá]
12. ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šu-ú u ^{lú}UMBISAG
13. ^{md}UTU-MU A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-NUMU[N-x(x)]
14. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}APIN U_4.9.[KAM]
15. MU.36.KAM
16. ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TI[R^{ki}]
17.[^{m}]⌞^{d}UTU-MU A-šú šá ^{m}r⌟x¬ [...]
18. [pu-ut] e-ṭer šá x¬ [...]⌜na?- u [...na-šu-ú]

Translation (partial)

[x] ⌜xx 4[+x..] (apparently sum or quantity) of [Zērīya] s. of Zākiru charged against Taqiš. In month [x] he will give (i.e. repay or deliver). If he does not give, he will give [...] in month XI. Taqīš will ....in accordance with his share.

Witnesses: Ina-BA (or MA)-ŠU- ⌜ina⌟+[x....]/Ṣillâ, Zēra-ibni /Nabû-nāṣir, Balāṭu /Ša-Nabû-šū; and the scribe Šamaš-iddina /Uraš-zē[rV-x(x)]; Dilbat, date. Postscript: Šamaš-iddina / ⌜⌞x¬ [...] guarantees for payment of [...].

14. BM 47357 = Bertin 1141; Dilbat, 26.V.37 Nbk. II = 568 BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield

1. 1 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. KÁ šá ^{m}na-din A ^{m}a-šab-šú
3. ina UGU ^{md}AMAR.UTU-SU <A-šú>
4. šá ^{m}šu-ma-KAM ina ^{iti}DU_6
5. ina ma-ši-hi šá 1 PI gam-ru-tú
6. a-na ^{m}ki-din-^{d}AMAR.UTU
7. A-šú šá ^{md}AMAR.UTU-DÙ
8. i-nam-din
9. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ e-ṭir
rev. 10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}PA-MU-DÙ
11. A-šú šá ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šú-ú
12. ^{m}ÌR-[^{d}+EN?] A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
13. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}si-lim-^{d}+EN.LÍL
14. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}IZI
15. U_4.26.KAM MU.37.KAM
16. ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL E^{ki}

Translation

One kor of dates, estimated yield, sector of Nādinu desc. of Ašābšu, charged against Marduk-erība <s.> of Šuma-ēreš. In month VII he will deliver (the dates), full amount, in the measure of one *pānu* to Kidin-Marduk s. of Marduk-ibni. The tithe of Uraš is paid.

Witnesses: Nabû-šuma-ibni /Ša-Nabû-šū (and) Ardi-[Bēl?]/Šulâ; scribe: Silim-Illil. Dilbat, date.

Remarks

1. This is the smallest quantity of dates recorded in the archive of Ea-qarrād-ilī.[122]

12. For the tentative restoration cf. BM 103610, 9', likewise a paternal name of a witness of the same archive.

15. BM 103543 – Dilbat,[123] 22.VI.37 Nbk. II = 568 BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 12 GUR 3 PI ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.⌜LU
2. A.GÀR^{meš} šá UGU URU šá ^{md}AMAR.U[TU]-SUR
3. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ-MU šá ina ŠU^{II}
4. ^{md}+AG-MU-GIN A-šú šá ^{m}mu-še-zib-^{d}AMAR.UTU
5. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}a-ra-bi A-šú šá ^{m}ŠEŠ-it-tab-ši
6. ina ^{iti}DU_6 ZÚ.LUM.MA gam-ru-tu
7. ina dil-bat^{ki} ina KÁ ka-lak-ku
lo.e. 8. i-nam-din
9. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ ina ŠÀ^{bi}
rev. 10. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}NUMUN-iá A-šú šá
11. ^{m}za-kir ^{m}šu-la-a A-šú šá
12. ^{m}ar-ra-bi u ^{lú}UMBISAG
13. ^{m}ki-na-a A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-ke-šir
14. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}KIN U_4.22.KAM
15. MU.37.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU
16. LUGAL E^{ki}

Translation

12;3 kors of dates, estimated yield of the meadows which are above the city, of Marduk-ēṭir s. of Nabû-aha-iddina, that are in the hands of (= administered by) Nabû-šuma-ukīns. of Mušēzib-Marduk. They are charged against Arrabu s. of Aha-ittabši. In month VII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo). The tithe of Uraš is included.

Witnesses: Zērīya /Zākiru and Šulâ /Arrabu (presumably gs. of Aha-ittabši, i.e. the debtor's son), and the scribe Kīnâ /Nabû-kēšir; Dilbat, date.

16. Farber and Farber 2018: 219-220:NUL 03- Dilbat,[124] 25.VI.37 Nbk. II = 568 BCE. Promissory note for 11 kors of dates, estimated yield of the field of Etel-pî (e-tel-pi)/Adad-nāṣir (^{d}IŠKUR-na-ṣir), which is in the irrigated area of Hūpēti belonging to (? *šá ina*) the 0;1 kor of land (that is) located within (the land of) Kīnâ (ki-na-a)/Šullumu (šul-lu-mu), are owed by Rēmūtu (Re-mut)/Nabû-ušebbi (^{d}+AG-ú-šeb-bi <for ši?>), to be delivered in month VII in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo). The tithe of Uraš is included (*ina libbi*).

[122] Cf. Jursa 2010: 402 with 2308-2310.
[123] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 726, 729; 2010: 402 with 2309.
[124] According to Jursa *apud* Farber and Farber 2018: 220.

Witnesses: Ardi-Bēl (ÌR-^{d}+EN)/Šulâ (šu-la-a)//Bā'iru ($^{11.lú}$ŠU.KU$_6$), Nabû-zēra-iddina (^{d}+AG-NUMUN-MU)/Nabû-ahhē -šullim ($^{12.d}$+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-GI)// Naggāru; and the scribe Ardi-Gula (ÌR-^{d}gu-la)/Bēl-ibni ($^{14.d}$+EN-ib-ni)//Nurzānu (nu-ur-za-na).

17. BM 103609 – Dilbat, 13.II.39 Nbk. II = 566 BCE; promissory note for barley.

1. 1 GUR 1 (PI) 4 BÁN ŠE.BAR SAG.DU šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia
2. A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR^{meš}
3. ina UGU ^{m}GIN-A A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-PAP^{me}-MU A ^{m}uš?-ú-zu
4. a-na UGU^{hi} 1 GUR 1 (PI) 2 BÁN ŠE.BAR ina UGU^{hi}-šú ta-rab-bi
5. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ ŠE.BAR TIL-ti ina dil-bat^{ki} ina KÁ
6. ka-lak-ka i-nam-din
7. ŠE.BAR TA ^{iti}ŠU MU.38.KAM
8. SUM^{na}-at A.ŠÀ-šú šá URU ^{d}URAŠ
9. šá ÚS.SA.DU ^{m}NUMUN-ia

lo.e. 10. maš-ka-nu ra-šu-ú

11. šá-nam-ma ina UGU ul i-šal-laṭ

rev. 12. a-di ^{m}NUMUN-ia ŠE.BAR-su
13. i-né-ṭa-er ^{lú}mu-kin-ni
14. ^{m}e-tel-pi A-šú šá ^{m}bar-ba-ru A ^{lú}BÁHAR
15. ^{m}NUMUN-DÙ A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-PAP A ^{lú}NAGAR
16. ^{m}e-tel-pi A-šú šá ^{m}NÍG.DU u ^{lú}UMBISAG
17. ^{md}URAŠ-BA^{šá} A-šú šá ^{md}la-ga-mar-MU-GIŠ
18. A ^{md}+EN-e-ṭè-ru dil-bat^{ki}
19. ^{iti}GU$_4$ U$_4$.13.KAM MU.39.KAM
20. ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-PAP LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

1;1.4 kor of barley original amount of Zērīya s. of Zākiru desc. of Ea-qarrād-ilī charged against Kīn-apli s. of Nabû-ahhē-iddina desc. of Uš?-ú-zu. It will accrue interest of 0;1.2 kor per one kor of barley (i.e. 26.66% annual interest). In month II he will deliver the barley, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo). The barley was given since month IV of the 38th year. His field in Āl-Uraš which is adjacent to (that of) Zērīya is pledged. No other creditor shall exercise control over it until Zērīya has been paid his barley in full.

Witnesses: Etel-pî /Barbaru //Pahhāru, Zēra-ibni /Nabû-uṣur(or -nāṣir)//Naggāru, Etel-pî /Kudurru; and the scribe Uraš-iqīša /Lā-gamar-šumu-līšir// Bēl-ēṭeru; Dilbat, date.

18. BM 103494 – Dilbat, 1.V.42 Nbk. II = 563 BCE; receipt for dates (also as price of beer).

1. 5 GUR ⌜1 (PI) ⌜⌞4 BÁN ZÚ.LUM.MA ŠÁ[M]
2. 2 dan-nu^{meš} šá KAŠ.DU$_{10}$ (text GAM).GA 2 GUR ZÚ (text MU).LUM.MA
3. e-lat 3 (PI) 1 BÁN hu-bul-lu$_4$
4. 2 GUR 1 (PI) 4 BÁN šá KÙ.BABBAR e-lat 2 GUR (followed by an erasure)
5. ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{m}ta-bu-^{d}+EN? iš-šu-u
6. šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
7. a-na ^{m}ga-a-am a-na <<ina>> UGU?^{hi}(? crowded signs)
8. ^{m}tab-né-e-a A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-ke-šìr

lo.e. 9. id-din-nu ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir

10. pu-ut ⌜e-ṭer šá ZÚ.LUM.MA na-ši

rev. 11. 1 GUR 1 (PI) 4 BÁN ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}ṭa?-bu-ú
12. ^{m}ga-a-am ma-hir
13. PAP 13 GUR <<1 GUR>> 1 (PI) 4 BÁN ZÚ.LUM.MA ina ŠÀ^{bi} KÁ (squeezed)
14. 10 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN
15. ina ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{m}tab-né-e-a A-šú šá
16. ^{md}+AG-ke-šìr i-šal-lim
17. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}+AG-KÁD A-šú šá ^{m}ú-bar
18. A ^{m}ir-a-nu ^{md}+AG-GIN-A A-šú šá
19. ^{m}TIN-su A ^{md}UTU-ba-a-ri

u.e. 20. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}ki-din-^{d}ŠÚ A ^{lú}AD⌟?.⌜GU[B$_5$]?

21. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}IZI U$_4$.1.KAM

le.e. 22. MU.42.KAM
23. ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU
24. LUGAL TIN.TIR⌝^{ki}⌟

Translation

(**a**) 5;1.4 kors of dates, the price of two vats of good beer, two kors of dates apart from a debt of 0;3.1 kor < of dates>; 2;1.4 kor (purchased?) for silver, apart from two kors of dates which Tabu-Bēl? brought, (and) which Ardi-Bēl s. of Šulâ gave to Gām on behalf of Tabnēa s. of Nabû-kēšir. Zērīya s. of Zākiru guarantees for the full repayment of the dates.
(**b**) Gām received 1;1.4 kor from Ṭābū?. Total: 13;1.4 kors of dates, out of which (in an) instalment ten kors of dates that Ardi-Bēl is fully paid from the dates of Tabnēa s. of Nabû-kēšir.

Witnesses: Nabû-kāṣir /Ubāru //Ir'anni, Nabû-kīn-apli /Balāssu //Šamaš-abāru; and the scribe: Kidin-Marduk //Atkuppu?; Dilbat, date.

19. BRM 1, 54 = Sack, *Amel-Marduk* 48 – Dilbat (in text), I.1 AmM. = 561 BCE (related to 20. BRM 1, 55 from 10.I.1 AmM., both are administrative records)[125]

Nabû-zēra-iddina (^{d}+AG-NUMUN-MU)/Aplâ(A-a), brought an unspecified sum of silver and an unspecified quantity of dates, implicitly as tax, from the Dilbatean military charioteers (^{lú}*dil-bat*$^{ki.meš}$. ^{lú}*taš-li-šú*^{meš}) for the period XI.0-I.1 AmM. (duration three months). The fact that the sum and quantity are not specified, indicates that BRM 1, 54 = *Amel-*

[125] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 728; 2010: 200-203 with 1153.

Marduk 48, 1-4 is a superscription of the following three sections (a-c), which record payments of specified sums of silver and quantities of dates. BRM 1, 55 = *Amel-Marduk* 49, 1-3 has an abbreviated superscription, stating that the deliveries are from Dilbat without mentioning the charioteers. Sections d-f below are retrieved from BRM 1, 55 = Sack, *Amel-Marduk* 49:

(**a**) 26 shekels of silver and 28;3 kors of dates (possibly as tax), apart from 60 kors of dates – all brought by Tabnēa (*tab-né-e-a*) and Zērīya (NUMUN-ia) to Nabāta (*na-ba-a-ta*). Tabnēa brought an unspecified sum of silver (it is not indicated to whom).
(**b**) 55 kors of later (dates) from Haddâ (*ha-ad-da-a*)/Nādinu (*na-din*) and Dihummu (*di-hu-um-mu*) which were received from Zērīya (NUMUN-ia)/Zākiru (*za-kir*). According to BRM 1, 55, the 55 kors were not the full amount.
(**c**) 20 shekels of silver received from Nabû-šuma-ibni (^{d}+AG-MU-DÙ) and his unnamed brothers and handed over by Ṭābīya (DU_{10}.GA-iá)/Zērīya(NUMUN-ia) to Šarru-ilūa (LUGAL-DINGIR-ú-a); Dilbat (in text), Ea-qarrād-ilī archive, I.1 AmM. = 561 BCE (BRM 1, 54 = Sack, *Amel-Marduk* 48, 4).
(**d**) 20 +[x?; x+?]1.2 kors (of dates) were received from Ardi-Marduk (ÌR-^{d}AMAR.UTU).
(**e**) Four kors (of dates) received by [xx]+DIŠ from [xx]/Bēl-ahhē-erība (^{d}+EN-PAP^{me}-SU).
(**f**) Šarru-ilūa received one kor of dates.

The last entry of BRM 1, 55 = Sack, *Amel-Marduk* 49 reports that Nabû-zēra-iddina (^{d}+A[G-NU]MUN-MU), brought [xx+?] 18;3 kors (of dates). The last word of this record is *ma-hir* meaning that all the sums and quantities (explicitly b, d-e and by implication a, c) were finally received by Nabû-zēra-iddina (^{d}+AG-NUMUN-MU)/Aplâ (A-a, BRM 1, 55 = Sack, *Amel-Marduk* 49, 1, without filiation: ^{d}+A[G-NU]MUN-MU, 9).

21. BRM 1, 56 – Dilbat, 29.VI.0 Nerigl. = 560 BCE;[126] promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 21 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. KÁ šá UGU URU šá ÚS.SA.DU ^{m}<<^{m}>>GIN-A
3. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU šá ^{m}tab-né-e-a
4. A-šú <šá> ^{md}+AG-ke-šìr šá ki-i HA.LA šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia
5. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-MU ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}ha-ad-da-a
6. A-šú šá ^{m}su-ni-ia ina ^{iti}APIN ZÚ.LUM.MA
7. gam-ru-tu ina dil-bat^{ki} ina KÁ ka-lak-ka
8. i-nam-din eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ u sis-sin-ni
9. šá ^{lú}NU.^{giš}KIRI$_6$ e-lat e-ṭir
10. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+AG-MU-DÙ
lo.e. 11 (indented). A-šú! šá ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šu-ú
rev. 12. ^{md}la-ga-ma-al-GÁL^{ši} A-šú šá ^{md}AMAR.UTU-SUR
13. ^{md}U.GUR-ú-še-zib A-šú šá ^{m}DU$_{10}$.GA-ia
14. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+EN-TIN^{it} A-šú šá ^{m}ki-rib-tú
15. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}KIN U_4.29.KAM
16. MU SAG NAM.LUGAL.LA ^{d}U.GUR-LUGAL-ÙRU
17.LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki} šá la ^{m}NUMUN-ia
18. ZÚ.LUM.MA šá na-man-ma
u.e. 19. ul i-nam-din

Translation

21 kors of dates, estimated yield of the instalment of the section above the city adjacent to (the property of) Kīn-apli s. of Nabû-ahhē-iddina, belonging to Tabnēa s. of Nabû-kēšir which is instead of the share of Zērīya s. of Bēl-iddina. It is charged against Haddâ s. of Sunīya. In month VIII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo). Besides, the tithe of Uraš and the compensation for the gardener were paid in full.

Witnesses: Nabû-šuma-ibni /Ša-Nabû-šū, Lā-gamal-ušabši /Marduk-ēṭir; Nergal-ušēzib /Ṭābīya; and the scribe: Bēl-uballiṭ /Kiribtu.

Dilbat, date.

Postscript: He will not deliver dates of anybody, (dates) which are not of Zērīya.

Remark

18. *na-man-ma* is a scribal error for *man-na-ma*.

22. BM 103504 – Dilbat, 6.XI.11 Nbn. = 544 BCE. The obverse is eroded. Therefore most of the operative section is severely damaged. It is a promissory note for 0.5 mina of silver of Ilatu (^{f}i-lat) d. of [...] to be repaid perhaps in month IX, i.e. within 11 months if the reading is correct. The debtor is perhaps a female as well. The deed is issued in the presence of Ubārtu ($^{r}_{L}$ ^{f}ú-bar-tu$_4$) d. of Ṭābīya (DU_{10}.GA-iá). The reverse is fully preserved. It has a list of three witnesses, viz. Marduk-iddina (^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU)/Aplâ (A-a)//Nabāyu (na-ba-A+A), Iddin-Bēl (MU-^{d}+EN)/Aplâ (A-a)//Maṣṣar-abulli (^{lú}EN.NUN KÁ.GAL), and Nabû-iddina (^{d}+AG-MU)/Gimillu (gi-mil-lu)//Lē'ēa (A-GÁL-le-e-a); and the scribe Nergal-uballiṭ (^{d}U.GUR-TIN^{it})/Zērīya (NUMUN-iá)//Ea-qarrād-ilī (^{16}[^{d}IDIM-^{d}G]U$_4$-DINGIR^{meš}), gs. of Zākiru.[127]

23. BM 103520 – Dilbat (delivery at ~),[128] date lost; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. ⌜5 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU BURU$_{14}$ A.ŠÀ
2. KÁ šá $^{garim?}$ba-zi-ia pu-ut a-ha HA.LA?

[126] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 729.

[127] See Jursa 2005: 100 with 723.

[128] See Jursa 2010: 402 with 2309.

3. šá it-ti ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}KI-^{d}+AG-TIN
4. ù ^{f}ba-ba-a DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{m}na-din
5. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}MU?-^{d}URAŠ A-šú šá
6. ^{md}AMAR.UTU-NUMUN-DÙ A ^{m}is?-sik-ku ina ^{iti}DU$_6$
7. ZÚ.LUM.MA-’ 5 GUR gam-ru-tu
8. [i]na dil-bat^{ki} KI 1 GUR tu-hal-la
lo.e. 9. [bi]l-tu$_4$ šá hu-ṣa-bi 1+en da-[ri-ku]
10 (damaged line, presumably more by-products). [... i-nam-din]

rev. almost entirely destroyed (only few signs at the end of the lines).

Translation

> Five kors of dates, estimated yield of the field of a sector of the irrigated area of Bazīya, of half the share which is held together by Zērīya s. of Itti-Nabû-balāṭu and Babâ d. of Nādinu. (The dates) are charged against Iddin?-Uraš s. of Marduk-zēra-ibni desc. of Issiku. [He will deliver] the aforementioned dates, five kors, full amount, in Dilbat together with <one> *tuhallu*-basket per <one> kor < of dates>, a load of firewood and a *darīku*-container [...].

Remark

6. *Is?-si-ku* – is the first sign a mistake for NA?

24. HAM 73.2970 – 51 x 30 x 17 mm.; obv. mostly broken away. Dilbat, date lost. Damaged promissory note for dates (apparently estimated yield). In month VII their full amount is to be measured in Dilbat in the storehouse (silo) and delivered to Zērīya s. of Zākiru.The tithe of Uraš is paid (lit. is included). The name of the debtor (presumably gardener) is not preserved.

Witnesses: Ardi-Bēl /Šulâ //Bā’iru, Ardi-Gula /Uraš-bēlāni, and Balāṭu /Ša-pī-Uraš; scribe: xx¬(//)[xx]ᵀGU$_4$-DINGIR?-x¬ (presumably of the creditor’s clan).

1’. [...] ᵀ$_L$x¬ (trace)
2’. ina $^{i[ti}$DU$_6$ ZÚ.LUM.MA.... ga-mi]r-tu
3’. ina dil-bat^{ki} ᵀina É ka¬-lak-ku
4’. i-maš-šah’--ma a-na
5’. ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir i-nam-din
lo.e. 6’. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}UR[AŠ ina] ŠÀ^{bi}
rev. 1. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN A-šú šá
2. ^{m}šu-la-<a> A ^{lú}ŠU.KU$_6$
3. ^{m}ÌR-^{d}ME.ME A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-EN-a-ni
4. ^{m}ba-la-ṭu A-šú šá ^{m}šá-pi-^{d}URAŠ
5. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}xx¬ (both illegible traces) [xx]ᵀGU$_4$-DINGIR?-x¬

Remainder broken away

25. BM 103610 – fragmentary and damaged deed concerning estimated yield; probably from Dilbat or its region in view of the archival affiliation and the payment of the tithe to Uraš;[129] date lost

1’. 24? [...]
2’. 4 GUR 2 (PI) 3 BÁN na-šá-a-tu$_4$ ᵀx⌟
3’. šá ^{m}ÌR-ia A ^{m}MU-GIN
4’. PAP 45 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
5’. a-di (text KI)-i eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ
6’. [i]na pa-ni ^{md}+EN-MU NIGIN ina KUR ba-bi
lo.e. 7’. ŠÁM ^{giš}GEŠTIN šá ina UGU
8’. ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir ^{m}tab-né-e-a
rev. 9’. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-GÁL^{ši} ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a
10’. ^{md}la-ga-mal (text ŠÁ)-SUR A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-PAP
11’. pu-ú-tú na-šú-ú ma-hir
12’. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}NUMUN-ia A-šú šá ^{m}A-a
13’. ^{md}+AG? (or URAŠ?)-ᵀxxx⌟[...]

remainder broken away

Translation

> 24? [...]
>
> bearing? 4;2.3 kors of Ardīya s. of Šuma-ukīn. Total: 45 kors of dates, estimated yield, inclusive of the tithe of Uraš, are at the disposal of Bēl-iddina, all from the land of Bābu. The price of grapes which is charged against Zērīya s. of Zākiru-Tabnēas. of Nabû-šubši, Ardi-Bēls. of Šulâ(and) Lā-gamal-ēṭirs. of Nabû-nāṣir assume guaranty; received.
>
> Witnesses (only the beginning of the list is preserved): Zērīya /Aplâ and Nabû ? (or Uraš?)–xxx.

Remark

8’-11’. The formulation is confused: it is not clear who are the debtor(s) and the guarantor(s).

26. HAM 73.3022 – 43 x 19 x 17 mm.; Ālu-ša-Līšir (place of delivery). The place of issue and the date are not preserved, but the link with Dilbat is beyond doubt as the deed belongs to archive of Ea-qarrād-ilī (a Dilbatean clam). Damaged promissory note for barley (quantity not preserved); the full amount of the barley will be delivered by Šulâ (debtor) to Zērīya ? ([NUMUN-i] a?/Zākiru (*ʔza-kir*)//Ea-qarrād-ilī (presumably the creditor) in month II (during the harvest) in Ālu-ša-Lišir. The only witness, viz. Nabû-šuma-iškun /Iqīša-Marduk //Zannē; and the scribe, Pir’u /Zērīya //Ea-qarrād-ilī (gs. of Zākiru, presumably son of the creditor), are preserved.

1’. [... ^{m}NUMUN-i]a?
2’. [A-š]ú¬ ᵀšá ^{m}za-kir A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR^{meš}

[129] See Jursa 2010: 402.

3'. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ ŠE.BAR gam-mir-ti
4'. ina URU šá ^{m}li-šìr ^{m}šu-la-a
5'. i-na SAG.DU-šú i-nam-din
rev. 1. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+AG-MU-GAR^{un} A-šú šá
2. ^{m}BA^{šá}-^{d}AMAR.UTU A ^{lú}za-an-né-e
3. ^{lú}DUB.S[AR] ^{m}pir-' A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia
4. [A] ^{d}I[DIM-^{d}]⌜GU$_4$⌝-DINGIR^{meš}
5. [...] traces

Remainder broken away

1.3.1.2.2. The archive of Aba-ul-īde.

HAM 73.2983-58x49x20mm.; Dilbat, 22.I.5 Dar. I = 517 BCE; partnership contract.

1. 20 GUR Z[Ú.LUM.MA šá ^{f}[t]u?-ri-in-na?-tu$_4$
2. DUMU.MUNUS-su [šá ^{md}+E]N-mi-mir (sic, for mi-gir?)
3. A ^{m}AD-NU-⌜ZU⌟ [u] ⌜20⌟ GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA
4. šá ^{f}nu-ub-ta-a DUMU.MUNUS-⌜su šá ^{md}⌟+[URAŠ] (or ^{d}+AG])-⌜DA?⌟
5. KI a-ha-meš a-na KASKAL^{II} *iš-kun-nu*-[']
6. mim-ma ma-la ina URU u ⌜EDIN⌟
7. [i]p-pu-uš a-ha-a-tú šú-n[u']
8. ŠE.BA-tu ma-la KUR ⌜x⌟ [...]
9. ^{dug}kak-su ZABAR [...]
lo.e. 10. ZABAR [m]u-šah-h[i-in-nu AN.BAR]
rev. 11. mu-šah-hi-in-n[u ZABAR]
12. ^{dug}nam-zi-tu$_4$ KI.MIN [...]
13. ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG (10 wedges) A-šú šá ^{m}x⌟-[...]
14. ⌜u ^{m}MU-^{d}+URAŠ A-šú šá ^{md}+A[G-... (or E[N-...] or UR[AŠ-...])
15 (cracked). ⌜mu⌟?-⌜x⌟-hi?-tu$_4$ ZA[BAR ...]
16. a-ha-a-tú šú-nu ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}⌜⌞x⌝[...]
17. A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-ia A ^{m}ÌR-^{d}IDIM
18. ^{m}nar-gi-ia A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-si-lim
19. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}MU-^{d}+URAŠ A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut
u.e. 20. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}BÁR U$_4$.22.KAM
21. MU.5.KAM ⌜^{m}da⌝-a-ri-muš
le.e. 22. L[UGAL] T[IN.TIR^{ki}] LUGAL KUR.KUR^{meš}

Translation

20 kors of dates of ^{f}[T]urinatu$_4$? d. of Bēl-migir? desc. of Aba-ul-īde, and 20 kors of dates of Nūbtâ d. of Nabû (? or Uraš?)-le'i, which they deposited for a business partnership. Whatever (profit they make) in the city and the countryside they will share equally. ... a bronze *kaksu*-container,

an [iron] cooking vessel (*mušahhinu)*, a bronze cooking vessel (*ditto*),

a bronze fermenting vat [...]. Iddin-Nabû s. of x-[...] and Iddin-Uraš s. of Na[bû-...] (or B[ēl-...] or Ur[aš-[...]); bronze x-vessel [...] they will share equally.

Witnesses: [DN-...])/Ardīya //Arad-Ea and Nargīya / Uraš-silim; scribe: Iddin-Uraš /Rēmūtu; Dilbat, date.

Remark

9-16. The purpose of the enumeration of the utensils, which form part of the common enterprise (cf. 16a) is not clear due to the damaged context.

12. *namzītu* in non-cultic context is made of bronze.

1.3.1.2.3. The archive of Ahūtu

BM 47349 = Bertin 1148; Dilbat, 29.XII. 39 Nbk. II = 565 BCE; promissory note for barley and dates with pledge

1. 1 GUR 3 (PI) 4 (BÁN) ŠE.BAR 1 GUR 1 (PI) 4 (BÁN) ZÚ.LUM.MA
2. bit-qa KÙ.BABBAR šá ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+EN A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-iá
3. A ^{m}ŠEŠ-ú-tu ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-MU
4. A-šú šá ^{m}qi-ba-a u ^{f}hi-ip-ta-a
5. DAM-šú ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ ŠE.BAR ina ^{iti}DU$_6$
6. ZÚ.LUM.MA ina SAG.DU-šú-nu ina dil-bat^{ki}
7. i-nam-din-nu
8. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ KÙ.BABBAR i-nam-din-nu
rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}ÌR-iá A-šú šá ^{m}u$_4$-da -^{d}XXX
10. ^{md}+AG-SIG^{iq} A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-GI
11. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}MAŠ-ŠEŠ-MU
12. A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-iá A ^{md}XXX-PAP
13. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ŠE U$_4$.29.KAM
14. MU.39.KAM ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU
15. LUGAL TIN.TIR$^{ki\ na_4}$e-ru-ú
16. maš-ka-nu a-di 3 (PI) 2 (BÁN) ŠE.BAR hu-bul-šú
17 (inserted in small script, indented) ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ i-nam-din
18. ŠE.BAR šá KASKAL^{II} šá ^{md}+AG-EN-di?-ni-iá
19. ú-ìl-tì mah-ri-tu$_4$ hu-up-a-tú

Translation

1;3.4 kor of barley, 1;1.4 kor of dates (and) 1/8 (shekel) of silver of Rēmūt-Bēl s. of Zērīya descendant of Ahūtu, are charged against Nabû-zēra-iddina s. of Qībâ and his wife Hiptâ. They will deliver (lit. "give") the barley in month II and the dates in month VII in their original amount in Dilbat. They will repay the silver in month II.

Witnesses: Ardīya /Uda-Sîn, Nabû-udammiq /Bēl-ušallim; and the scribe Ninurta-aha-iddina /Zērīya //Sîn-nāṣir. Dilbat, date.

Postscript: A grinding slab is a pledge until he pays his debt of 0;3.2 kor of barley; he will repay (it) in month II. The barley is from a business partnership of Nabû-bēl-dīnīya?. The previous debt note is destroyed.

Comment

The barley will be delivered and the silver will be repaid within two months during the harvest of the cereals, both without interest. The dates will be delivered within seven months. The postscript is about another debt.

1.3.1.2.4. The archive of Anaṭla-Uraš

HAM 73.2996 – beige, 43 x 27 x 16 mm.; Dilbat, 25.VIb. – Nbk. II (presumably 584, 574 or 564 BCE rather than 603, 600, 598 or 596 BCE seeing that the ductus and format are not early NB); promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 4 ⌜G[UR ZÚ.LUM.MA] ZAG BURU$_{14}$?
2. EDIN? šá ^{m}x⌝[x(x)]-MU A-šú šá
3. ^{m}NUMUN-⌞ ^{d}URAŠ?⌝ [A? ^{m}]⌜⌞a-na-aṭ-la-a-^{d}URAŠ
4. šá? ^{md}+EN-[NUM]UN-MU A-šú šá ^{m}A-a
5. ina UGU ^{md}URAŠ-NUMUN-DÙ
6. A-šú šá ^{md}la-ga-mil-SUR
lo.e. 7. ina ^{iti}DU$_{6}$ gam-ru-tú
8. ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din
rev. 9. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ ina ŠÀ^{bi}
10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}EN-šú-nu
11. A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-MU-ÙRU ^{lú}UMBISAG
12. ^{md}URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN A-šú šá
13. ^{md}UTU-NUMUN-DÙ dil-bat^{ki}
u.e. 14. ^{iti}[KI]N⌝⌞2⌝ KAM U$_{4}$.25.KAM
15. [MU. x.KAM] ⌜xx⌟-ÙRU
le.e. 16. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

> Four kors of dates, estimated yield of the plain? of x⌝[x(x)]-MU s. of Zēr-Uraš desc. of Anaṭla-Uraš, belonging to Bēl-zēra-iddina s. of Aplâ, are charged against Uraš-zēra-ibni s. of Lā-gamal-ēṭir. In month VII he will deliver the full amount in Dilbat. The tithe of Uraš is included.
>
> Witness: Bēlšunu /Uraš-šuma-uṣur and the scribe Uraš-kīn-zēri /Šamaš-zēra-ibni; Dilbat, date.

Remarks

3 *in fine*. The surname is apparently a corrupt form of *Anaṭṭal-Uraš*.The latter might have been shortened from **Anaṭṭal-ana-Uraš* "I looked for (the support of) Uraš", cf. with inverted order *Ana-Šamaš-anaṭṭal* from OB Mari.[130] He might have been the original owner of the land (characterized as "plain").

15. The king is Nebuchadnezzar II (less likely Nabopolassar) and not Neriglissar seeing that no intercalated Elul is recorded during his short reign.

[130] CAD N/2: 125b, s.v. *naṭālu*, b, 3. Like many surnames of Babylonian urbanites, **Anaṭṭal-ana-Uraš* might have been coined in the Kassite or in the early Post-Kassite period, the more so since the verb is not productive in names from the 1st millennium BCE.

1.3.1.2.5. The archive of Arad-Ea

Sandowicz 2012: 349–350 and pl. 32: BM 49748 (Dailem collection) – Dilbat, 22.I.13 Dar. I = 509 BCE; obligation of two guarantors (mother and her son) to bring a conscript who is an oblate of Uraš to an (implicit) functionary of the E-ibbi-Anu temple within 18 days. If he does not turn up, they have to supply a substitute. The 4th = last witness is also an oblate of Uraš.

Amtīya (^{f}GÉME-ia)/Habaṣīru (^{3}ha-ba-ṣi-ru, 2f.: –⌜ia⌝, without filiation: 11), mo. of Rēmūtu (re-mut), co-guarantor: she and her son Rēmūtu (guarantor) had to bring Ahhē-iddina /Nabû-uterri, oblate of Uraš, and deliver him to Nidinti-Bēl /Iqīša-Marduk //Arad-Ea by 10.II.13 Dar. I, i.e. within 18 days. If they fail to do so, they have to supply a (travelling) conscript (*allāku*) for service in Elam.

Ahhē-iddina (ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU)/Nabû-uterri (^{d}+AG-ú-ter-ri, 4f., without filiation: 7), oblate of Uraš ($^{5.lú}$ši-rik ^{d}URAŠ): the guarantors, Rēmūtu and his mother Amtīya, had to bring him to Nidinti-Bēl /Iqīša-Marduk //Arad-Ea by 10.II.13 Dar. I.

Nidinti-Bēl (ni-din- ⌜tu$_{4}$⌝-^{d}+EN)/Iqīša-Marduk (BA^{šá}-^{d}AMAR.UTU)//Arad-Ea (^{7}ÌR-^{d}IDIM, 6f.: -⌜tu$_{4}$⌝-, without filiation: 8, 12): Rēmūtu and his mother Amtīya had to deliver to him Ahhē-iddina /Nabû-uterri, oblate of Uraš, by 10.II.13 Dar. I. Nidinti-Bēl was linked to the E-ibbi-Anu, or functioned as a temple official.[131]

Witnesses: Uraš-lē'i (^{d}URAŠ-DA)/Mušēzibu (^{16}mu-še-zib)//Rēmūt-Ea (re-mut-^{d}IDIM, 15f.), Bēl-aha-iddina (^{d}+EN-ŠEŠ-MU)/Rēmūtu (^{17}re-mut, 16f.), Uballissu-Gula (TI-su-^{d}ME.ME)/Marduk-šuma-uṣur (or -nādin-ahi, ^{d}AMAR.UTU-MU-ŠEŠ)//Rab-banê ($^{18.lú}$GAL.DÙ, 17f.), Aha-ittabši (ŠEŠ-it-tab-ši) oblate of Uraš (^{lú}*ši-rik* ^{d}URAŠ, 18); scribe: Munahhiš-Marduk (mu-na-hi-šú-^{d}AMAR.UTU)/Nabû (^{d}+AG)-M[U-x] (19).

1.3.1.2.6. The archive of Ardi? – Nergal

HAM 73.2852 – 53 x 40 x 20 mm.; Dilbat, 17.I.12 Dar. I = 510 BCE; promissory note for dates

1. 3 (PI) 2 BÁN ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{m}DUB-NUMUN A⌝-[š]ú šá
2. [^{md}+AG?-it-tan-nu A ^{m}ÌR⌝?-^{d}U.GUR
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}UTU-MU A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-MU-GAR^{un}?
4. ina ^{iti}DU$_{6}$ ZÚ.LUM.MA'-
5. 3 (PI) 2 BÁN gam-ru-tu ina dil-bat^{ki}
6. ina É ^{m}DUB-NUMUN i-nam-din
remainder of obv. uninscribed
rev. 7. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}MU-^{d}+EN A-šú šá ^{md}+AG?-DINGIR-x⌝

[131] See Sandowicz. 2012: 350.

8. A ^{m}ŠEŠ^{meš}-ú-tu ^{m}la-ba-ši?
9. A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-ka-ṣir A ^{lú}NAGAR?
10. ^{md}U.GUR-MU A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+EN
(space)
11. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-it-tan-nu A-šú šá ^{md}ŠÚ-MU-MU
12. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}BÁR U_4.17.KAM
13. MU.12.KAM ^{m}da-ri'-muš
u.e. 14. LUGAL E^{ki} LUGAL KUR.KUR

Translation

0;3.2 kor of dates of Šāpik-zēri s. of Nabû?-ittannu desc. of Ardi?-Nergal charged against Šamaš-iddina s. of Bēl-šuma-iškun?. In month VII he will deliver the aforementioned dates, 0;3.2 kor as full payment, in Dilbat in Šāpik-zēri's house.

Witnesses: Iddin-Bēl /Nabû?-il-x¬//Ahhūtu, Lā-abâši? /Uraš-kāṣir//Naggāru?, Nergal-iddina / Rēmūt-Bēl; and the scribe Nabû-ittannu /Marduk-šuma -iddina; Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.7. The archive of Ašābšu

Sandowicz 2019: 47-52:16 = BM 47475 – Dilbat, possibly archive of Ašābšu, -.-.2 Nerigl. = 558/7 BCE.
Litigation concerning a field and a house (see above, 1.1.2) before a collegium of three judges, presided by Anu-šarra-uṣur (^{d}a-nù-LUGAL-ÙRU), who -judging from his name – might have been linked to the palatial sector. He is followed by Iq-im-ma-A+A (perhaps West Semitic < *Yaqīm-āy*)[132] and Nabû-šuma-iškun (^{d}+AG-MU-GAR^{un}). All the judges impressed their seals on the tablet. The scribe is Iqīšâ (BA^{šá}-⌜a⌝)/ Nabû-ibni ($^{21.d}$+AG-DÙ)//Ibnāyu (DÙ-A+A).

1.3.1.2.8. The archive of Bā'iru

BM 103644- Dilbat, 7.VI.1 Nbn. = 555 BCE; promissory note for dates.

1. 3 GUR 2 BÁN ZÚ.LUM.MA šá [(0)]
2. ^{m}ni-qu-du A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-MU-x¬
3. A ^{lú}ŠU.KU_6 u ^{m}lu-È-nu-ur
4. A-šú šá ^{m}NUMUN-ia ina UGU^{hi}
5. [^{md}]+EN-na-kut-tú-al-si-iš
6. ^{lú}qal¬-la šá ^{m}tab-né-e-a
7. ina ^{iti}DU_6 ZÚ.LUM.MA
8. [gam-ru]-tu ina dil-bat^{ki} SUM$^{[i]n}$
lo.e. 9. [e-la]t ú-ìl-tì
10. [ma]h-ri-tu_4
rev. 11. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}é-zi-da-NUMUN-DÙ
12. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-DÙ^{uš} A ^{m}a-qar-^{d}+AG
13. ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šu-ú ^{lú}qal-la šá [^{m}]MU?¬-iá
14. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-MU-GIN
15. A-šú šá ^{md}+⌜AG¬-PAP^{me}-BA?^{šá} dil-bat^{ki}
16. ^{iti}KIN U_4.7.KAM MU.1. K[AM]
17. ^{md}+AG-I LUGAL E^{ki}

Translation

3;0.2 kors of dates of Niqūdu s. of Nabû-šuma-x desc. of Bā'iru and Lūṣi-ana-nūri s. of Zērīya charged against Bēl-nakuttu-alsiš slave of Tabnēa. In month VII they will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat. Apart from a previous promissory note.

Witnesses: Ezida-zēra-ibni /Nabû-īpuš //Aqar-Nabû and Ša-Nabû-šū, slave of Šumīya?; and the scribe Nabû-šuma-ukīn /Nabû-ahhē-iqīša?; Dilbat, date.

Remark

5. Short for *Bēl-ina-nakutti-alsiš*, cf. *Nabû-ina-nakutti-alsiš*.[133]

1.3.1.2.9. The archive of Bēl?-nāṣir

BM 103586 – obv. somewhat damaged; Dilbat, 29.II.17 Nbk. II = 588 BCE; quitclaim.[134]

1. ina ú-ìl-tì šá 3? ⌜M[A.N]A 11 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
2. šá ^{m}A-a A-šú šá ^{m}BA^{šá}-a A ^{m}EN⌟?-PAP
3. ^{lú}?šá-kin šá UGU É.AN?.NA? (both damaged)
4. šá UGU^{hi} ^{md}x¬ -⌜└x-DÙ^{uš}
5. A-šú šá ^{m}⌜xx⌟-[xx] ⌜└x šá [x]
6. ù dil-bat^{ki}-ú (all damaged) ^{meš}
7. ^{md}la-ga-⌜ma⌟-al-M[U?]-⌜SUM?^{na}¬? (all damaged)
8. A-šú šá ^{m}ra-šil 2 MA.NA 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
9. pu-ut HA.LA šá ^{m}⌜A-a
lo.e. 10. A-šú šá ^{m}BA^{šá}-a i-mu-ru
11. ta-a-ri u da-ba-ba
12. ina bi-ri-šú-nu iá-a-nu
rev. (deliberately erased line)
13. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}+AG-SUR
14. A-šú šá ^{m}šu-la-a A ^{lú}AD.GUB_5
15. ^{md}+AG-SUR A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-NIGIN^{ir}
16. A ^{m}al-la-nu ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+AG
17. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-KÁD ^{m}MU-MU
18. A-šú šá ^{m}mu-šal-lim u ^{lú}UMBISAG
19. ^{m}ki-rib-ti <<DIŠ>> dil-bat^{ki}
20. ^{iti}GU_4 U_4.29.KAM
u.e. 21. MU.17.KAM
22. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.⌜DU-ÙRU
le.e. 23. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

From a promissory note of three? minas and 11 shekels of silver of Aplâ s. of Iqīšâ desc. of Bēl?-nāṣir,

[132] With *ya-* > *i-* and <*mm*> for /*m*/.

[133] Stamm, *Namengebung*: 200.

[134] BM 47352 is linked to BM 103586 by a common witness, but this is not an adequate proof that they belong to the same archive.Therefore it is classified as unassignable (below, 1.3.3.1, 1).

the foreman in charge of the household of E., which is charged against DN-īpuš s. of ⌜xx⌟-[xx] ⌜x šá [x] and the Dilbateans. Lā-gamal-šuma?-iddina? s. of Rāšilu has taken care of (lit. inspected) two minas and 15 shekels in accordance with the share of Aplâ s. of Iqīšâ. There will be no renewal of litigation among them.

Witnesses: Nabû-ēṭir /Šulâ //Atkuppu, Nabû-ēṭir / Uraš-upahhir //Allānu, Ardi-Nabû /Nabû-kāṣir, and Šuma-iddina /Mušallimu; and the scribe Kiribtu; Dilbat, date.

Remark

15. Ligature, cf. 103581, 21.

1.3.1.2.10. The archive of Daraṣu

BM 82546 Dilbat, 17.V.14 Dar. I = 508 BCE, receipt for silver, *ilku*-tax for 14 Dar. I.

1. 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR šá gi-nu šá na-da-nu
2. u ma-ha-ra il-ki šá MU.14.KAM
3. ^{m}da-ra-'-šú LUGAL E^{ki} LUGAL KUR^{meš}
4. šá ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+URAŠ A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}URAŠ
5. A ^{md}UTU-SU ^{md}+[A]G-GIN-A A-šú šá
6. ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-GÁL^{ši} A ^{m}da-ra-ṣu
7. ^{lú}EN ^{lú}BAN-šú ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+URAŠ ma-hi-ir
8. 1+en-na-ta-a$_4$ šá-ṭa-ri
9. il-qu-ú šá ul-tu

lo.e. 10. MU.14.KAM a-di-i ^{iti}BÁR

rev. 11. MU.15.KAM
12. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}⌜ÌR⌟-^{d}URAŠ A-šú šá
13. ^{md}+EN-ke-šìr A ^{m}AD-NU-ZU
14. ^{md}+AG-MU A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-SIPA-šú-nu
15. ^{md}+EN-MU A-šú šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG A ^{m}ZÁLAG (text 4 wedges, like HU)-za-nu
16. ^{m}MU-^{d}URAŠ A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN
17. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-GIN-A A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-GÁL^{ši} (on edge)
18. A ^{m}da-ra-ṣu dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}IZI

u.e. 19. U$_4$.17.KAM MU.14.KAM
20. ^{m}da-ra-'-šú LUGAL E^{ki}
21. u KUR.KUR^{meš}

Remark: scribe = party.

Translation

Ten shekels of marked (stamped) silver of the kind commonly used for transactions (lit. "of giving and receiving"),[135] *ilku*-tax for year 14 of Darius, King of Babylon and (all) the lands, of Rēmūt-Uraš s. of Arad-Uraš desc. of Šamaš-erība, Nabû-kīn-aplis. of Nabû-zēra-ušabši desc. of Daraṣu his (i.e. Rēmūt-Uraš's) co-holder of the bow-fief received from Rēmūt-Uraš. Each took a document. (The payment) is for (the period of) year 14 until I.15.

Witnesses: Arad-Uraš /Bēl-kēšir //Aba-ul-īde, Nabû-iddina /Nabû-rē'išunu, Bēl-iddina /Iddin-Nabû //Nurzānu, Iddin-Uraš /Ardi-Bēl; and the scribe (= the above-mentioned recipient); Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.11. The archive of Ea-dipār-ilī

HAM 73.2864 = Wright 1994: 183–184 and pl. 19:19 – 48 x 41 x 18 mm.; Dilbat, 17+.X.3 Npl. = 601 BCE; promissory note (a combination of two such notes) for barley with 20% interest to two men for five months

1. 16 GUR 1 PI ŠE. BAR SAG.DU NÍG.GA ⌜^{d}+IN[NIN] <dil-bat?>
2. šá ^{md}URAŠ-DÙ-NUMUN A-šú šá ^{m}za-kir
3. A ^{md}IDIM-di-par-DINGIR^{me} ina UGU ^{md}URAŠ-MU
4. A-šú šá ^{m}ku-na-a A ^{m}se-ki-ri
5. 4 GUR ŠE.BAR SAG.DU NÍG.GA ^{d}+INNIN dil-bat
6. šá ^{md}URAŠ-DÙ-NUMUN ina UGU ^{md}+AG-DA
7. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-DÙ A ^{md}IDIM-di-par-DINGIR^{me}
8. a-na UGU 1 GUR 1 PI ŠE.BAR ina UGU^{hi}-šú<-nu>
9. ta-rab-bi ina ^{iti}SIG$_4$ i-nam-di-[nu]
10. 1+en pu-ut 2-i na-šu-⌜ú⌟

lo.e. 11. mim-mu-šú<-nu> šá URU u ⌜EDIN⌟
12. ma-la ba-áš-šu-⌜ú⌟ [maš-ka-nu]
13. [šá] ^{md}URAŠ-DÙ-NUMUN ^{lú}[ra-šu-ú]

rev. 14. šá-nam-ma ina UGU ul ⌜i⌟-[šal-laṭ]
15. a-di ^{md}URAŠ-DÙ-NUMUN ⌜ŠE.[BAR-šú]
16. i-šal-⌜li-mu ú¬-ìl-tì ⌜mah-ri-ti⌟

17 (centred). ⌜he-pa⌟-tu$_4$
18. ^{lú}mu-kin-⌜nu⌟ ^{md}URAŠ-MU-DÙ
19. [A]-šú šá ^{m}GIN-A A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$-DINGIR^{me}
20. ^{md}+AG-MU A-šú šá ^{m}ú-bar A ^{md}IŠKUR-M[U?]-⌜KAM¬?
21. ^{m}bar-ba-ru A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-SUR [A ^{m}xx]
22. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-SUR-⌜ZI¬^{meš}
23. [A]-šú šá ^{m}ṣil-la-a A ^{md}IDIM-^{d}GU$_4$¬-DINGIR^{me}

u.e. 24. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}AB U$_4$.⌜17+[x].⌜KAM

le.e. 25. MU.3.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-⌜ÙRU
26. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

16;1 kors of barley, original amount, property of Ištar <Dilbat >, of (i.e. administered by) Uraš-bānizēri s. of Zākiru descendant of Ea-dipār-ilī charged against Uraš-iddina s. of Kunâ descendant of Sēkiru;

Four kors of barley, original amount, property of Ištar Dilbat of (i.e. administered by) Uraš-bānizēri charged against Nabû-lē'i s. of Nabû-zēra-ibni

[135] For *na-da-nu ²u ma-ha-ra* see Jursa 2010: 488–491.

desc. of Ea-dipār-ilī. One *pānu* of barley per kor will accrue against them; they will deliver (the barley) in month III. Each assumes guaranty for the other. Whatever property they (possess) in the city and the countryside is [pledge] of Uraš-bāni-zēri. No other creditor shall exercise control over it until Uraš-bāni-zēri has been paid his barley in full. The previous debt note is destroyed.

Witnesses: Uraš-šuma-ibni /Kīn-apli //Ea-qarrād-ilī, Nabû-iddina /Ubāru //Adad-šu[ma?]-ēreš? and Barbaru /Bēl-ēṭir //[xx]; and the scribe Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti /Ṣillâ //Ea-qarrād-ilī; Dilbat, date.

Remark

16. This implies that this promissory note is a renovation (*novatio*).

1.3.1.2.12. The archive of Malahhu

BM 103568 – Dilbat, 1.XII.10 Dar I = 511 BCE; damaged promissory note of silver

1. 19˩ GÍN KÙ.BABBAR BABBAR-ú šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+EN
2. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-A-MU A ^{lú}MÁ.LAH$_4$
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-TIN-su-E
4. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ KÙ.BABBAR-’ 19 GÍN BABBAR-ú
5. i-nam-din (remainder of line deliberately erased)
6. KÙ.BABBAR šá KASKAL šá <<šá>> ^{m}SUM^{na}-a <<pu-x¬[(x)]>>
7. pu-ut HA.LA-šú DAM ^{m}ha-am-ba-šú
8. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-DA maš-ka-nu šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+E[N]

lo.e. 9. $^{l[ú]}$TUK-ú šá-ma-nu (sic, not šá-nam-ma!) ina UGU^{hi}-šú

10. [u]l i-šal-laṭ e-lat ú-ì[l-tì mah-ri-ti šá]
11. 6 GUR-’ šá ina UGU[^{hi}-šú]

rev. 12. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}Ì[R? (or M[U?- ...]
13. A-šú šá ^{m}ZÁLAG-e-a A ^{m}gu-[... ^{m}xx]
14. A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-DA ^{m}LÚ-^{d}na-na¬-˹a?]
15. A-šú šá ^{m}bi-ib-ba-nu
16. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}U.GUR-MU A-šú šá
17. ^{m}mu-še-zib-^{d}+EN dil-bat^{ki} $^{i[t]i}$ŠE U$_4$.1.KAM
18. MU.10.KAM da-a-x+šá-šú

u.e. 19. LUGAL KUR^{ki} (sic) LUGAL KUR.KUR

followed by a faint drawing.

Translation

19 shekels of white silver of Iddin-Bēls. of Nabû-apla-iddina desc. of Malahhu charged against Iddin-Nabû s. of Nabû-balāssu-iqbi. In month II he will repay the aforementioned 19 shekels of white silver. The silver is for a business partnership of Iddinâ. For his share the wife of Hambašu s. of Nabû-lē’i is pledged to (lit. the pledge of) Iddin-Bēl. No other creditor shall exercise control over it. Apart from a previous promissory note of six kors which is charged against him.

Witnesses: Ar[di?- (or Id[din?- ...]/Nūrēa//Gu-[...], [xx]/Uraš-lē’i, and Amīl-Nanâ/Bibbānu; and the scribe Nergal-iddina /Mušēzib-Bēl. Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.13. The archive of Nādin-(š)ê

1. SC 37 – beige, 48 x 40 x 17 mm., eroded in several points; Dilbat, [x+?]1.VIII.11 Dar. I = 511 BCE; quitclaim.

1. [lu]-˹˺ú ú-ìl-tì lu-ú GÍD.DA¬
2. [lu]-ú re-mu-tú lu-ú šá-ṭa-ri˩
3. ˹šá KÙ.BABBAR ŠE.BAR ˹˺x x ù? mim-ma
4. ra-šu-tu [m]a-la ba-šu-ú
5. gab-bi šá ^{m}[^{d}+EN-DÙ^{u}]^{š} A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-MU
6. A ^{m}na-din-š[e?-e re-he-e]t? KASKAL^{li}? šá ^{md}+EN-DÙ^{uš}
7. ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}+AG-[..] A-šú šá ^{m}BA^{šá}-a
8. A ^{md}IDIM-mit-lak ina [ŠU^{i}]^{i} ^{md}+EN-DÙ˹^{uš}¬
9. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-MU A [^{m}]˹na˩-din-še?-e
10. ta-al-la-’ e-ṭir-tu$_4$

lo.e. 11. ^{md}+AG-it-tan-nu ši-in-nu

12. [^{lú}m]u-kin-nu ^{md}URAŠ-MU A-šú
13. šá ^{md}+EN-ra-šil A ^{lú}GAL ba-né-e
14. ^{md}+EN-ŠEŠ? A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-SUR A ^{md}+EN-MU-NUMUN
15. ^{md}[x]-it?-tan?-nu A-šú šá ^{m}[x]^{meš}-MU
16. [A ^{md}IDI]M-mit-lak ^{md}x-TIN^{iṭ}
17. [A-š]ú ˹šá˩ ^{mr}˺x¬-ia (line not completed)
18. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ-it-tan-nu A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-PAP? (or a squeezed MU?)
19. A ^{m}al-la-nu ˹dil˩-bat^{ki} ^{iti}APIN
20. [U$_4$.x+?]1.KAM MU.11.KAM ^{m}da-a-ri-ia-muš
21. [LU]GAL E^{ki} LUGAL KUR^{meš}

Translation

Any promissory note, or receipt, or (deed of) grant, or document concerning silver, barley or x, or any (instrument of) obligation of Bēl-īpuš s. of Bēl-iddina desc. of Nādin-(š)ê, the balance of the business partnership of Bēl-īpuš charged against Nabû-[ittannu?] s. of Iqīšâ desc. of Ea-mitlak, that may show up (is to be considered) paid in full. Nabû-ittannu ...

Witnesses: Uraš-iddina /Bēl-rāšil //Rab-banê, Bēl-ahi ? (or –uṣur?)/Nabû-ēṭir //Bēl-nādin-zēri, [DN]-ittannu?/Ahhē?-iddina//Ea-mitlak, [DN]-uballiṭ/ ˹˺x¬-ia; and the scribe Nabû-aha-ittannu /Bēl-nāṣir ? (or –iddina?)//Allānu; Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.14. The archive of Rab-banê

BM 103581– Dilbat, 16.V.37 Nbk. = 568 BCE; promissory note for unripened dates.

1. 5 GUR 4 PI ú-hi-nu ṣib-tu$_4$
2. 2 KÁ^{meš} šá ^{m}ÌR-ia A-šú šá ^{m}MU-GIN
3. ina UGU har-ri šá ^{d}URAŠ
4. ina UGU ^{md}URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN
5. A-šú šá ^{md}UTU-NUMUN-DÙ A ^{lú}SANGA dil-bat^{ki}
6. ina ^{iti}APIN ZÚ.LUM.MA
7. gam-ru-tu ina dil-bat^{ki} ina KÁ ka-lak-ku
8. a-na ^{md}+AG-MU-GAR^{un}
9. A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+AG A ^{lú}GAL ba-né-e

lo.e. 10. <<A>> i-nam-din
11. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}du-muq

rev. 12. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-⌜SUR⌟ ^{md}KÁ-SUR
13. A-šú šá ^{m}ki-rib-tú ^{m}DU$_{10}$.GA-ia
14. A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-MU-ú-kin
15. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN
16. A-šú šá ^{md}UTU-NUMUN-DÙ dil-bat^{ki}
17. ^{iti}IZI U$_4$.16.KAM
18. MU.37.KAM ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-PAP

u.e. 19. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
20. HA.LA šá ^{d}URAŠ

le.e. 21. u eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}+URAŠ
22. e-lat e-ṭer

Translation

> 5;4 kors of unripened dates, interest (*ṣibtu*), from two sectors (KÁ^{meš}) < of a palm grove> on Harruša-Uraš belonging to Ardīya s. of Šuma-ukīn are charged against Uraš-kīn-zēri s. of Šamaš-zēra-ibni desc. of Šangû-Dilbat. In month VIII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat at the gate of the storehouse (silo) to Nabû-šuma-iškun s. of Ardi-Nabû desc. of Rab-banê.
>
> Witnesses: Dummuqu/Bēl-ēṭir, Bau-ēṭir /Kiribtu, and Ṭābīya /Uraš-šuma-ukīn; and the scribe (= debtor); Dilbat, date. In addition, the share of Uraš and the tithe of Uraš are fully paid.

Remark

21. ligature as in e.g., BM 103586, 15.

1.3.1.2.15. The archive of Rēšīya

HAM 73.2999 – 45 x 28 x 17 mm.; Dilbat (place of delivery of the dates), early Achaemenid; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1 (traces). [... ZÚ.LUM.MA ...]
2. šá ^{garim}ba-zi-ia a-di KÁ? šá mi-⌜xxx⌟ [(u)]
3 (inserted in small script). šá ul-tu ma-la-ku? šá ^{m}sum-mu a-⌜di⌟ UGU
4. ki-la-a-ta šá GARIM? šá ^{m}re-mut u ŠEŠ^{meš}-šú
5. A^{meš} šá ^{md}URAŠ-PAP^{meš}-MU A ^{lú}re-ši-ia
6. ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}+AG-PAP^{meš}-MU A-šú šá
7. ^{md}+EN-šú-nu A ^{lú}ma-qar-tu$_4$
8. ina ^{iti}DU$_6$ ZÚ.LUM.MA gam-ru-tu
9. ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din

lo.e. 10. eš-ru-ú šá ^{d}URAŠ e-ṭir

rev. (at the beginning two deliberately erased lines)
11. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}ÌR-ú-tu
12. A-šú šá ^{m}ŠEŠ-SUR A ^{lú}re-ši-ia
13. ^{md}+URAŠ-NUMUN-DÙ A-šú šá ^{m}⌜šu⌟-la-a
14. A ^{lú}su-ha-⌜A⌟+[A...]

Remainder (scribe, place and date, *ca.* 2 lines) broken away

le.e. 15'. LUGAL E^{ki} LUGAL KUR.KU[R]

Translation

> [(quantity of)] dates, [estimated yield)], of the irrigated area of Bazīya as far as the gate? of M. [(and)] from the passage? of Šummu as far as the dike of the irrigated area?, belonging to Rēmūtu and his brothers sons of Uraš-ahhē-iddina desc. of Rēšīya, are charged against Nabû-ahhē-iddina s. of Bēlšunu desc. of Maqartu. In month VII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat. The tithe of Uraš is fully paid.
>
> Witnesses: Ardūtu/Ahu-ēṭir//Rēšīya and Uraš-zēra-ibni /Šulâ //Sūhāyu; [scribe, place and date: RN] King of Babylon, King of (all) the lands.

Remark

11f. The first witness is a member of the same clan as the archive owner.

1.3.1.2.16. The archive of Sîn -šadûnu

HAM 73.2897 – 49 x 37 x 22 mm.; Dilbat, 8.X.13 Dar. I = 509/8 BCE; promissory note for barley

1. 4 PI ŠE.BAR šá ^{m}mu-na¬-[pir-x]
2. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-MU-MU A ^{md}XXX-šá-du-nu
3. šá KASKAL^{II} šá ^{m}EN-šú-nu A-šú šá ^{m}MU-MU
4. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}ha-hu-ru A-šú šá
5. ^{md}+AG-it-tan-nu A ^{lú}MÁ.LAH$_4$
6. ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ ŠE.BAR'- 4 PI gam-mir-tu$_4$
7. ina dil-bat^{ki} ina É ^{m}mu-na-pir-x¬(or <<MU>>?)

lo.e. 8. i¬-[nam-di]n

rev. 9. [...]+DIŠ
10. [...] ⌜x (trace)
11. A-šú [šá ...] ⌜A⌟? ⌜^{md}+EN-ri-bi
12. ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ-it-⌜tan⌟-nu A-šú šá ^{md}+EN?-bul-liṭ?-su?
13. A ^{m}DINGIR-ba-ni ^{md}A-É-LUGAL-MU
14. A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-ŠEŠ-MU A ^{m}ku-ri-i¬

15. ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-DÙ ^{lú}UMBISAG A-šú šá
16. ^{md}+AG-MU-MU A ^{lú}SANGA ^{d}IŠKUR
17. ina (probably due to dittography) dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}AB U_4.8.KAM
u.e. 18. MU.13.KAM ^{m}da-ri-’-[š]ú?
19. LUGAL E^{ki} u KUR.KUR⌝[(^{meš})]

Translation

0;4 kor of barley of Muna[pir-x] s. of Nabû-šuma-iddina desc. of Sîn-šadûnu of the business partnership of Bēlšunu s. of Šuma-iddina charged against Hahhūru s. of Nabû-ittannu desc. of Malahhu. In month II he will deliver the aforementioned barley, 0;4 kor, as full payment in Dilbat, in the house of Munapir-x.

Witnesses: [...]⌜x/[...]//?Bēl-rībi, Nabû-aha-ittannu /Bēl?-bullissu? //Ilu-bani, Mār-bīti-šarra-iddina /Uraš-aha-iddina //Kurî; scribe: Nabû-zēra-ibni /Nabû-šuma-iddina //Šangû-Adad; Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.17. The archive of Šangû-Dilbat “B”

There is no telling whether it is related to the much earlier archive of Šangû-Dilbat from 12-16 Ššu.[136]

1. BRM 1, 53 – Dilbat, 14.XII.[x] Nbk. II
1.1 GUR ŠE.NUMUN A.ŠÀ ^{giš}K[IRI$_6$ ^{giš}GIŠIMMAR]
2. šá ^{md}URAŠ-BA^{šá} A-šú šá [...]
3. A ^{lú}SANGA dil-bat^{ki} a-na ^{md}+AG-x⌟[...]
4. A ^{m}ZÁLAG-e-a a-na 6 MU^{meš}
5. id-din pu-ut ha-ar-ru šá har-ri [(u a-ri-it-ti) ^{md}+AG-x]
6. na-šu-ú šá-ak-nu [šá] ma-na-a[h]?
7. he-ru-tu a-na lab⌟-⌞ki⌟ i-he-re
8. lìb-bi u ha-ru-ut-ti i-na-a[ṣ-ṣar]
9. i-ga-ri i-ip-pu-⌞uś⌟ a⌟-[...]
10. šá-la-áš ina 1 KÙŠ UGU 1 GUR 4 G[UR ZÚ.LUM.MA]
11. << šá-la-áš ina 1 KÙŠ>> a-na UGU 1 G[UR ŠE.NUMUN]
12. 4 GUR sis-sin-nu i[k-kal]
rev. 13. šá it-ta-bal-kit MAŠ [MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR]
14. i-tur-ru ina ^{iti}DU$_6$ A.[ŠÀ? ina IGI-šú]
15. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}šu-l[a?-a?...]
16. ^{m}KI-^{d}UTU-TIN A-šú šá ^{md}[...]
17. ^{md}la-ga-ma-al-PAP A-šú šá ^{md}[...]
18. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}ki-din-^{d}AMAR.UTU A-šú šá [...]
19. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ŠE U_4.14.KAM [MU.x.KAM]
20. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL [E (or TIN.TIR)^{ki}

Translatiom

One kor of arable land, palm grove of Uraš-iqīša s. of [...] desc. of Šangû-Dilbat gave (for date culture) to Nabû-x[...] desc. of Nūrēa for the duration of six years. Nabû-x[...] is responsible for the digging of a canal [(and a canal branching off at a right angle)] (and for) doing the work underneath (the date palms).[137] He will perform the digging of ditches for moistening (the soil), will take care of the “date-cabbage” (the date palm’s central bud) and of the branches, and will build an enclosure wall x[...]. One third? per one cubit on one kor (of surface). He (scil. Nabû-x[...] as a gardener) will enjoy four kors of dates per one kor of arable land as compensation. The violator will repay 0.5 mina of silver. As from (lit. “in”) month VII the field will be placed at his disposal.

Witnesses: Šul[â?]/[...], Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu /^{d}[...], and Lā-gamal-nāṣir /^{d}[...]; and the scribe Kidin-Marduk /[...]; Dilbat, date.

1.3.1.2.18. The archive of [...]/Kalbá //Ši-x-ia?

BM 92798 = Bertin 2678, [Dilbat (region)], 2.IX.29 Dar. I = 493 BCE; sale of a palm grove and a field.

1.3 GUR 1 (PI) 4 (BÁN) A.ŠÀ ^{giš}KIRI$_6$ ^{giš}GIŠIMMAR
2. zaq-pa iṣ-ṣi bil-tu$_4$ A.ŠÀ mé-re-šú u tap-tu-ú
3. pi-hat dil-bat^{ki} ^{garim}NAM.GÀR DUMU^{meš}
4. ÚS AN.TA IM.SI.SÁ ÚS.SA.DU ki-la-a-ta šá L^{meš}
5. ÚS KI.TA IM.U$_{18}$.LU ÚS.SA.DU ki-la-a-ta šá L^{meš}
6. ÚS AN.TA IM.MAR.TU ÚS.SA.DU ŠE.NUMUN NÍG.GA ^{d}URAŠ
7. ÚS KI.TA IM.KUR.RA ÚS.SA.DU ^{f}ha-na-A+A
8 (centred) DUMU.MUNUS šá ^{md}URAŠ-MU-GIN
9. ŠU.NIGIN 3 GUR 1 (PI) 4 (BÁN) ŠE.NUMUN A.ŠÀ šu-a-tì
10. ina lìb-bi 5 (BÁN) ŠE.NUMUN zaq-pa MAŠ [MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR ši-mi-šú u]
11. 3 GUR 5 (BÁN) ŠE.NUMUN mé-re-šú ù tap-tu-ú
12. [(ki-i) 1 MA.NA] 2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ši-mi-šú
13. [ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}...DUMU] šá ^{m}kal-ba-a DUMU ^{m}ši-x⌝⌟-⌜⌞ia?
14. [ŠÁM ...^{giš}]GIŠIMMAR u NÍG.GA ^{d}URAŠ
15. [...] ⌜x⌟ GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
16. [... a-na] ^{d}URAŠ it-ta-din
17. [ma-hir a-pil za-ki ru-gu-um-ma-a ul] i-ši
18. [ul i-tur-ru-ma a-na a-ha-meš ul] i-ra[g-gu-mu]

remainder broken away

rev. 1’. [ina ka-nak ^{na}4]KIŠIB šu-a-tì
2’. [ina IGI ^{m}...] ^{lú}šà-tam é-im-bi-an.na
3’. [IGI ^{m}...] DUMU šá ^{m}ba-zu-zu DUMU ^{m}DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR
4’. ^{md}+EN-ka-ṣir DUMU šá ^{m}še-el-li-bi DUMU ^{m}DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR

[136] See Jursa 2005: 101:7.4.4.

[137] For *mānahu* see Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 133a *ad* 8 and for the tasks and obligations of the gardener 129–130.

5'. [m]NUMUN-ú-tu DUMU šá [md]+EN-SUM[na] DUMU [m]da-bi-bi
6'. [m]ha-qir-ri (for za-kir-ri?) DUMU šá [m] x⌝⌟-[x]-[d]+AG DUMU [m]mu-še-zi-bi
7'. [md]+AG-bul-liṭ-su DUMU šá [md]UT[U-x]-ŠEŠ

remainder broken away

Translation

3;1.4 kors of arable land, palm grove planted with fruit-bearing trees, as well as a cultivated and newly prepared (for cultivation) field, (in) the province of Dilbat, (in) the irrigated area of Namkar-mārē.

Upper long side, north: adjacent to the dike of the "fifty"

lower long side, south: adjacent to the dike of the "fifty"

Upper long side, west: adjacent to the arable land, property of Uraš;

lower long side, east: adjacent to the (property of) [f]Hanāya d. of Uraš-šuma-ukīn .

Total: 3;1.4 kors of arable land, this (same) field, of which 0;0.5 kor are planted (with date palms), 0.5 [MA.NA (is) its price and] 3;0.5 kors are of a cultivated and newly prepared (for cultivation) field. Its price is [one mina] and two shekels of silver.[138]

[from PN s.] of Kalbâ, desc. of Ši-x⌝⌟-⌜⌟ia;

[...] palm [grove] and property of Uraš;

[...] x shekels of silver;

he gave [as tithe? to] Uraš

[He (the seller) is paid, he is clear], he has no [(future) claim].

They will not sue [each other]

[At the sealing] of this deed

[in the presence of PN], chief administrator of E-ibbi-Anu;

[PN] s. of Bazuzu desc. of Ēpeš-ili;

Bēl-kāṣir s. of Šēlebu desc. of Ēpeš-ili;

Zērūtu s. of Bēl-iddina desc. of Dābibī;

Haqirru (*recte* Zākiru ?) s. of x⌝-[x]—Nabû desc. of Mušēzibu;

Nabû-bullissu s. of Šamaš-[x]-uṣur (or -nādin-ahi)?

Remark

16. presumably the type of silver is specified.

1.3.2. Non-Dilbatean archives

1.3.2.1. Ebabbar archive

Columbia "46.5" (gift of Otto W. Fuhrmann bought from Grafton & Co., London, in July 1935), light brown, with square edges (typical of early NB tablets), 43x31x20mm.; Dilbat, 14.VIII.15 <Npl.> = 611 BCE; 112 *mašīhu*-s (= 22;2 kors)[139] of dates, estimated yield of year 15, delivered by the gardeners of Dilbat, viz. 60 (12 kors) by Ahhēa and 52 (10;2 kors) by Šamaš-ēreš and one *mašīhu* (0;1 kor) of sesame by Nabû-ahhe-šullim? the oil-presser. Both gardeners were active in the palm groves of the Ebabbar temple of Sippar which were located in the Dilbat region, notably in the area of Šupāl-āli and the irrigated area of Til-Bēltu, between 7.XII.1 Npl. = 624 BCE and the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign (625–604 BCE or shortly afterwards, the latest dated record is from 30.VI.19 Npl. = 607 BCE).[140]

1. [iti]APIN ⌜U$_4$14.KAM
2. MU.15.KAM
3. 1 ma-ši-hu šá ŠE?.GIŠ.Ì
4. [md]+AG-PAP[me]-⌜GI? -⌜xxx⌟ (all eroded)
5. ⌜A⌟ [m]TIN [lú]Ì.SUR [i]ti]APIN U$_4$.14.KAM
lo.e. 6. MU.15.KAM
rev. 7. [Z]Ú.LUM.MA i-mit-ti šá [uru]dil-bat
8. MU.15.KAM [d]+AG-A-PAP
9. ŠU (=60) ma-ši-hu šá [m]ah-he-e-a
10. [lú]NU.GIŠ.SAR [uru]dil-bat[ki]
11. 52 ma-ši-hu šá [md]UTU-APIN[eš]
u.e. 12. [lú]NU.GIŠ.SAR [uru]dil-bat[ki]
13. an incised mark

A large quantity of dates (98;1.1.3 kors) grown in Dilbat by the gardener Bēl-iddina and brought to Sippar in 12 Nbn. (544/3 BCE) is recorded in the dossier of Ana-amat-Bēl-atkal of the Ebabbar archive.[141] The same archive has a record of 102 kors of dates, which were brought from Dilbat 25 years later (3 Dar. I = 519/8 BCE) by Šamaš-[kāṣir] /Nabû-kīn-apli.[142] This functionary (a descendant of Isināyu) was perhaps a *gugallu*. He

[138] See Jursa 2010: 404.

[139] One *mašīhu* = one *pānu* (0;1 kor, each kor has normally five *p*.) in Sippar (see Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 64, 151–152).

[140] See Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 90: 160a, 220b (cf. 2010: 347 with 2045) and Da Riva, *Ebabbar* : 122–128, 134–135, 399–400, 406a, 457b, s.vv. Ahhēa and Šamaš-ēreš; Spar and Jursa 2014, 22.

[141] Nbn. 691 (see Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 90-93, 220).

[142] CT 56, 231, 2f.; Šamaš-kāṣir recurs without his paternal name in lines 9, 13 ([dUTU]-KÁD) and 16,

also functioned as a scribe and occupied other offices during his career:[143] According to another document of the same archive, barley from Dilbat was given to Šamaš-kāṣir, overseer (^{lú}PA) of the brewers (of Ebabbar), on 5.II.4 Dar. I = 518 BCE.[144]

1.3.2.2. Eanna archive

Spar 1972: 55, 147:6, <Uruk>, 8.XII.6 Nbn. = 549 BCE; adm. record of purchase of beams.

Bēl-iddina (^{d}+EN-MU), chief administrator *(lúšà-tam)* of É-i-bi-^{d}a-nu-um (line 2), Nabû-balāssu-iqbi (^{d}+AG-TIN-su-E)/Bēl-zēri (^{d}+EN-NUMUN)//Šangû-Dilbat (*lú*É.BAR *dil-batki*, line 3),[145] and Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti (^{d}+AG-SUR-ZI^{me})/Gimillu (gi-mil-lu)//Šangû-Dilbat ($^{5.}$*lú*É.BAR *dil-batki*, line 4f.), are all defined as priests ($^{5.}$*lú*SANGA*me*) of ^{6}É-i-bi-^{d}a-nu-um. They sold to the Eanna temple of Uruk[146] 360 wooden beams (measures are indicated) for one mina of silver, i.e. six beams per one shekel. Eanna had to pay for the transport to Uruk (for oxen and [wagons?]. Here is evidence for overland transportation of bulk material and not by boats on the Euphrates (there is ample evidence for riverine transportation of wooden beams in 1st-millennium Mesopotamia).[147]

1.3.2.3. The archive of Egibi from Babylon

Dar. 269 from Dilbat, 6.V.10 Dar. I = 512 BCE is a promissory note of 22 kors of first-quality barley of Ubāru (ú-bar)/Ina-tēšî-eṭir (^{2}ina-SÙH-SUR)//Ša-nāšišu (šá-na-ši-šú), business partnership of Marduk-nāṣir-apli (^{d}AMAR.UTU-PAP-A, 4) charged against Nabû (^{d}+AG)-A+A-lu slave (*qallu*) of ^{d}x[...] (3) and [Nabû-zēra-ibni (or Zērīya)]/Itti-Nabû-balāṭu (^{5}KI-^{d}+AG-TIN)//Egibi (e-gì-bi).[148] The barley is to be delivered in Ubāru's house on Nār-Pi-qu-du on a watercourse (*e-du*). Apart from a previous promissory note of 10;2 kors of barley which is charged against him.

Witnesses: Uballissu-Gula (ú-bal-liṭ-su-^{d}gu-la)/Mušēzib-Marduk (^{12}KAR-^{d}AMAR.UTU)//Ba (or MA)-qa-su[(-....)], Lā-gamal-iddina (^{d}La-ga-ma-al-MU)/Lasi (^{d}La-si)-[xx]//Naggāru ($^{14.lú}$NAGAR), Lā-gamal-ēṭir (^{d}La-ga-ma-al-SUR)/x[...]//Nuhāšu (^{15}nu-ha-šú), Iqīšâ (BA^{šá}-a)//Itti-DN-[...] (KI-^{d}[...])//Adad-nāṣir ($^{16.d}$IŠKUR-PAP); scribe: Šulâ (šu-la-a)/Šamaš-udammiq ($^{17.d}$UTU-SIG$_{5}^{iq}$)//Nūr-ilišu (ZÁLAG-DINGIR-šú).

Fourteen kors of dates from ^{uru}Dil-bat^{ki} are recorded among other entries in a fragmentary document presumably from the early Achaemenid period which may be linked to the Egibi archive.[149] ^{uru}Dil-bat (line 6) is recorded in an administrative document from the time of Cambyses (place of issue and year are not indicated).[150] It concerms mainly vats and has Bēl-supē-m[uhur] (^{d}+EN-su-pe-e-m[u-hur], line 10) as deliverer as well as Kunâ (ku-na-a, line 7) and Kalabūtu (^{f}ka-la-bu-ut-tu$_{4}$, line 9) as recipients.

1.3.3. Unassignable documents from Dilbat (with various degrees of plausibility)

These documents cannot be assigned to recognizable archives. They are classified below by collections. The order within each collection is chronological. I hope that as soon as more prosopgraphical information is available, some of them will eventually be assigned to archives.

1.3.3.1. Dailem collection

1. BM 47352 = Bertin 1078; Dilbat (linked to BM 103586 by a common witness), 17.VI.20 Nbk. II = 585 BCE; sale of a female slave

1. ^{m}EN-šú-nu A-šú šá ^{m}ib-na-a
(erased line)
2. ^{fd}ba-nit-šar-rat ^{f}qal-lat-su
3. a-na 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ŠÁM ha-ri-iṣ a-na
4. ^{m}MU-MU A-šú šá ^{m}mu-šal-lim id-din
5. pu-ut se-he-e pa-qí-ra-nu ([...])
6. šá ^{fd}ba-nit-šar-rat
7. ^{m}EN-šú-nu ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}MU-M[U]
8. na-[š]i
rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ṣil-la-a A-šú šá
10. ^{m}nad-na-a ^{m}a-hu-šú-nu
11. A-šú šá ^{m}mu-'x ^{md}UTU-BA^{šá}
12. A-šú šá ^{md}AMAR.UTU-PAP (copy NU) ^{m}re-mut
13. A-šú šá ^{m}nad-na-a
14. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}šu-la-a A-šú šá
15. ^{m}ib-na-a dil-bat^{ki}
16. ^{iti}KIN U$_{4}$.<17.KAM MU.20.KAM>
17. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.<DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}>

< > - copied by Bertin, but no longer on tablet.

Translation

> Bēlšunu s. of Ibnâ sold Bānītu-šarrat, his female slave, to Šuma-iddina s. of Mušallimu for 15 shekels of silver, fixed price. Bēlšunu assumes guarantee from Šuma-iddina for (claims brought by) any

[143] See Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 55a bottom–55b top, s,v,, 103–105, 106 with 214, 108, 118 and *Bēl-rēmanni* : 37 with 122, Bongenaar, NB *Ebabbar*: 209–210. 497, s.v.
[144] *Dar*. 113, 4 (cf. Bongenaar, NB *Ebabbar* : 210 *ad loc.*).
[145] Cf. VS 5, 21, 35 from 10.XI.2 Nbn. = 553 BCE where he acts as witness.
[146] See Jursa 2010: 89–90 with 476.
[147] See the sources quoted by Spar 1972: 57, viz. ABL 490, 705, 1205, YOS 3, 10, 14–19.
[148] Cf. Ungnad 1941–1944: 60.
[149] Abraham 2004: 546:6 = BM 30854, rev. 5 (cf. 215, 231).
[150] *Camb*. 435.

person acting unlawfully and any claimant with regard to Bānītu-šarrat.

Witnesses: Ṣillâ s. of Nadnâ, Ahūšunu s. of Mu-x, Šamaš-iqīšas. of Marduk-nāṣir, Rēmūtus. of Nadnâ; and the scribe Šulâ s. of Ibnâ. Dilbat, date.

Remark

4. Šuma-iddina /Mušallimu recurs as w. in BM 103586.

9f., 12f. The first and last w. have the same paternal names. Were they brothers?

Comment

Details about the female slave's age are not given. The same price was paid for a young female slave less than five years later (21.XII.24 Nbk. II = 580 BCE) according to a deed from Ālu-ša-Nabû-iqbi (probably not far from Nippur).[151]

2. BM 47359 = Bertin 2988; Dilbat, 16.XII.31 ʿNbk. II or Dar. I> = 573 or 490 BCE; receipt for rations of the last quarter of the year (and oil for the whole year).

1. ^{iti}AB ^{iti}ZÍZ ^{iti}ŠE
2. ŠUK$^{hi.a}$ ^{md}+AG-MU-<GAR>^{un}
3. A-šú šá ^{m}mu-šal-lim
4. ina ŠU^{II} ^{md}+EN-<MU> A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-MU-DÙ <<IGI>>
5. ma-hi-ir šá šam-ni
6. šá 1 MU.AN.NA ^{md}+AG-MU-<GAR^{un}>

7 (indented). ina ŠU^{II} ^{md}+EN-MU

rev. 8 (indented). ma-hi-ir

9. ^{lú}mu-kin ^{m}ZI^{ti}
10. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-re-man-ni
11. ^{m}ÌR-^{d}taš-me-tu$_4$
12. A-šú šá ^{m}ni-din-tú-^{d}+EN
13. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}UTU-KAM
14. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-MU

lo.e. 15. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ŠE

16. U$_4$ (copy MU).16.KAM
17. MU.31.KAM

Translation

Nabû-šuma-iškun s. of Mušallimu received rations for months X, XI (and) XII from Bēl-iddina s. of Nabû-šuma-ibni. Nabû-šuma-iškun received of the oil for one year from Bēl-iddina.

Witnesses: Napištu /Bēl-rēmanni and Ardi-Tašmētu /Nidinti-Bēl; scribe: Šamaš-ēreš /Bēl-iddina; Dilbat, date.

Comment

The rations are distributed a fortnight before the end of the last quarter of the year. The quarter for distribution of rations in Dilbat suits the calendar year like in other temple cities of Babylonia (in Borsippa the last prebendal quarter is XI, XII and I of the following year).

Remark

4 *in fine* – The scribe wrote IGI and added (apparently later) the phonetic spelling *ma-hi-ir*.

3. BM 53784 – fragment; Gummānu, -.V.- Nbk. II/IV; deed recording transaction concerning a house in Dilbat (probably sale)

1. 9 GI^{meš} É ab-tu$_4$ [šá na-qa-ru (or na-pa-ṣu)]
2. ù e-pu-uš KI[^{ti} ...]
3. šá qé-reb dil-[bat^{ki}]
4. [xx] ⌞xx⌝ (illegible traces) [...]

remainder broken

rev. 1'. ^{m}⌞x⌝[...]
2'. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}gi-mil-l[u ...]
3'. ^{uru}gúm-ma-nu ^{iti}IZ[I...]
4'. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU LUGAL TIN.[TIR^{ki} ṣu-pur PN]
5'. ki-ma ^{im}DUB-šú tú-da⌝-[a-ta...]
6'. ^{túg}na-hal-la-ap-tu$_4$

u.e. 7'. ina a-šab šá ^{f}a-hat-⌞x⌝-[(x) DAM]
8'. ^{m}MU-ŠEŠ

Partial translation

Nine reeds of a ruined house [to be demolished] and to be rebuilt in the quarter of [...] which is within Dilbat.

[Witnesses: ...] and the scribe Gimil[lu...]; place and date. [fingernail mark of PN] is marked (on the tablet) in lieu of his (the seller's) seal. [...] a wrap (outer garment, *nahlaptu* with anaptyxis).[152] In the presence of Ahat[...wife] of Nādin-ahi (presumably the seller's wife).

4. Zawadzki 1996: 179:9= BM 53443 – Dilbat, 5.V.1 Cyr. = 538 BCE; fragmentary deed concerning 20 shekels of silver of Damqâ? (^{f}dam-qa?-[a?]); [...]/Ardīya ($^{?}$ÌR-iá), last (the only discernible) w. (rev. 1'f.); Rēmūt-Bēl (re-mut-^{d}+EN)/Zēra-ukīn (NUMUN-GIN), scribe (rev. 3').

5. Zawadzki 1996: 180:10 = BM 49773 – Dilbat, 14. –. 1 Cyr. = 538 BCE; promissory note for eight kors of dates, estimated yield of a palm grove in the district of Dilbat

[151] TuM 2/3, 19 (see Dandamaev 1984: 200, cf. 200–206 for more comparative material).

[152] The word occurs in a broken context, next to the section about sealing. Does it refer to an impression of textile on the tablet? (cf., e.g., Baker 2004: 145b *ad* 62).

to be delivered with by-products, viz. *tuhallu*-baskets, *gipû*-baskets, spadices, fibers, and a load of firewood, in one instalment in month [x]. He will pay three shekels of silver per 100 kors of dates as *habû* and *uhinnu* tax.[153] Apart from the tithe [of Uraš] and the payment due to the gardener.

Sîn -k[īn-x] (^{d}XXX-G[IN-x])/[...], creditor (presumably lessor, 1);

Ardi-Gula (ÌR-^{d}gu-l[a])/[...]//Šamaš-bāri ($^{4.d}$UTU-ba-a-ri), debtor (lessee, presumably gardener, 3f.); Bēl-iddina (^{d}+EN-MU)/Mušēzib-[DN] (mu-še-zib-[^{d}x(x)]), w. (11); Nabû-bāni-ahi (^{d}+AG-DÙ-ŠEŠ)/[...]//Šangû-Ea ($^{13.lú}$SANGA ^{d}é-a), scribe (12f.).

6. Zadok 1995 = Jursa 1995: BM 49718 - Dilbat, 27.XII.10 Dar. I = 511 BCE; contract for arranging a substitute for work in Elam as "pedestrian, marching, marcher" (*pa-da-šu-tu$_4$* < OIran. **pāda-šuta-* or sim. ~ Akkad *allāku* which belongs to the same semantic field but is of a different morphological category).[154] The duration is three months, apparently IV-VI.11 Dar. I, i.e. the arrangement was concluded four months in advance. The service period covers a quarter of the calender year, thereby compatible with the administrative practice in Dilbat. Uraš-ana-bītīšu (^{d}URAŠ-ana-É-šú)/Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-^{r}MU$^{¬}$), functioned as replacement (substitute) of Uraš-lē'i and will perform service in Elam for the duration of three months (1, without filiation: 5);

Uraš-iddina (^{d}URAŠ-^{r}MU), f. of Uraš-ana-bītīšu – reached an arrangement with Uraš-lē'i that Uraš-iddina's son, Uraš-ana-bītīšu, will be his substitute for service of three months in Elam (without filiation: rev. 1); Uraš-lē'i (^{d}URAŠ-DA)/Mušēzibu (^{3}mu-še-zib), arranged with Uraš-iddina that the latter's son, Uraš-ana-bītīšu will act as his substitute for service of three months in Elam. (2f.); Nabû-balāssu-iqbi (^{d}+AG-TIN-su-E), apparently a fuctionary who was responsable for the recruitment of people to do service in Elam (rev. 1). In case Uraš-ana-bītīšu does not perform his service of three months in Elam, his father will pay (an unspecified sum of) silver to Nabû-balāssu-iqbi as compensation.

Witnesses: Itti-Nabû-balāṭu (KI-^{d}+AG-TIN)/Ṭābīya (DU$_{10}$.GA-ia), Niqūdu (ni-qu-du)/Šuma-ukīn (MU-GIN), perhaps br. of Uraš-hušani (4th w.), Mukkēa (muk-ke-e-a)/Uraš-šuma-ukīn (^{d}URAŠ-MU-ú-[k]in), Uraš-hušani (^{d}URAŠ-hu-šá-ni)/Šuma-ukīn (MU-GIN), perhaps br. of Niqūdu (2nd w.); and the scribe [DN]-damqa-uṣur ($^{r d¬}$[(x)-S]IG$_6^{iq}$-ÙRU)/Šarēdu (šá-rid)//Šangû-Bēlet Ninā ($^{7.lú}$E.BAR ^{d}GAŠAN ni-ná-a).

7. BM 47350 = Bertin 2628 – Dilbat, [x+?]5.IX.27 Dar. I = 495 BCE; promissory note for barley (same protagonist as BM 47358)

1. 3 (PI) 2 BÁN) ŠE.BAR šá ^{f}i-[lat]
2. DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{m}ha-ba-ṣir([-ru])
3. DAM ^{m}MU-^{d}URAŠ ina UGU[^{hi}]
4. ^{m}ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU A-šú šá ^{md}IDIM-NUMUN-DÙ
5. A ^{m}nu-úr-šú ina ^{iti}GU$_4$ ŠE.BAR-a$_4$
6. 3 (PI) 2 (BÁN) gam-ru-tu$_4$ <ina> dil-bat^{ki}

7 (centred). i-nam-din

rev. 8. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}MAŠ-SU [A-šú šá]
9. ^{m}ta-qiš-^{d}gu-la ^{md}+AG-[...]
10. A-šú šá ^{m}mu-ra-šu-ú A ^{m}BA-^{d}UR[AŠ?]
11. ^{m}ni-din-tú A-šú šá ^{m}šá (copy ÌR)-^{d}+AG-šú-ú
12. <^{lú}>ši-rik ^{d}PA
13. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-ÙRU-šú A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-KÁD
14. A ^{lú}SANGA ^{d}MAŠ dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}GAN
15. [U$_4$ x+?]5. KAM MU.27. KAM
16. [^{m}]da-ri-ia-muš LUGAL E^{ki}

17 (centred). u KUR.KUR

Translation

0;3.2 kor of barley of Ilat d. of Habaṣīru wife of Iddin-Uraš are charged against Ahhē-iddina s. of Ea-zēra-ibni desc. of Nūršu. In month II he will deliver the entire aforesaid barley, 0;3.2 kor, <in> Dilbat .

Witnesses: Ninurta-erība[/]Taqīš-Gula, Nabû-[...]/Murašû//Iqīša-Ur[aš?], Nidintu/Ša-Nabû-šū, oblate of Nabû; scribe: Nabû-uṣuršū /Uraš-kāṣir //Šangû-Ninurta; Dilbat, date.

8. BM 47358 = Bertin 2667; Dilbat, 18.I.29 Dar. I = 493 BCE; promissory note for silver (same protagonist as BM 47350); the loan is to be repaid within *ca.* 40 days without (explicit) interest

1. 3 GÍN [...] KÙ.BABBAR BABBAR-ú
2. nu-uh-hu (copy: ú-mu)-[tu ...]-har šá ^{f}i-lat
3. DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{m}ha-ba-ṣi-ru DAM
4. [^{m}M]U-^{d}URAŠ DUMU-šú šá ^{md}+AG-lu-ú-sal-lim ^{lú}ši-iš-ku$_{14}$
5. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}še (copy LE)-el-li-bi
6. A-šú šá ^{m}ka-sa-a ina ^{iti}GU$_4$
7. KÙ.BABBAR-a$_4$ 3 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR BABBAR-ú ina SAG.DU-šú

8 (centred). i-nam-din

rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+EN-MU A-šú šá
10. ^{m}mu-še-zib A ^{lú}BÁHAR
11. ^{m}re-mut-^{d}URAŠ A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-re-man-ni
12. [^{m}x]-^{d}+AG A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-TIN-su-E A ^{m}tu-na-a
13. ^{md}+EN-ŠEŠ A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut

[153] This tax was a bit lower, viz. 2.5 shekels of silver, in Sippar on 7.IV of the same year according to *Camb*. 42.

[154] See Jursa 1995 *ad loc*. (with a remark of M. Mayrhofer on the etymology). The readings and the succinct formulation here heavily rely on the improved edition of Jursa 1995.

14. [m]gu-za-nu [lú]UMBISAG A [m]hu-ṣab dil-bat
15. [iti]BÁR U_4.18.KAM MU.29.KAM
16. [m]da-ri-[xx] LUGAL E[ki]
17. u KUR.[KUR]

Translation

Three shekels [...] of white hacked silver of Ilatu d. of Habaṣīru, wife of Iddin-Uraš s. of Nabû-lū-salim, the oblate, are charged against Šēlebu s. of Kasâ. In month II he will repay the aforementioned three shekels of white silver in their original amount.

Witnesses: Bēl-iddina/Mušēzibu//Pahhāru, Rēmūt-Uraš /Nabû-rēmanni, [x]-Nabû/Nabû-balāssu-iqbi //Tunâ, Bēl-ahi (or -nāṣir)/Rēmūtu; (and) the scribe Gūzānu //Huṣābu; Dilbat, date.

Remark

4 *in fine* – KUN with the phonetic value *-ku14* is recorded in a LB economic text from the same period (cf. CAD K: 527b, s.v. *kulūlu*, 1b *ad Camb.* 277, 11: *ku14-lu-lu,* Ebabbar archive, 525 BCE).

9. Weszeli [and Baker] 1997: 237–238, 245:5 = BM 47354 – Dilbat, 26.II.31 Dar. I = 491 BCE; deed of sale of a she-ass (aged six years) and her young ass for 11.5 shekels of white hacked silver with 87.5% fineness.

Iddin-Nabû (SUM[na-d]+A[G])/Nabû-ina-kāri-lūmur ([4.d]+AG-ina-kar-ri-lu-mur), seller (3f., without filiation: MU-[d]+AG, 8); Nergal-aba-uṣur ([d]U.GUR-AD-ÙRU)/Ubārīya (ú-bar-ia), buyer (7, without filiation: 10, 12: -[rd]+AG¬); Nabû ([d]+AG)-x-x[/...]//Ea-bani ([d]IDIM-DÙ), 1st discernible w. (15); Bē[l-...] ([d]+E[N-....]), segment of a filiation (w., 19); [...]/?[rx¬-[...], segment of a filiation (w., 20); Nabû-zēra-ibni ([d]+AG-NUMUN-DÙ)/Nabû-šuma-iddina ([d]+AG-MU-MU¬)//Šangû-Adad ([22.lú]SANGA [d]IŠKUR), scribe (21f.).[155]

10. BM 47355 = Bertin 2733 (damaged); Dilbat, 12.VI.34 Dar. I = 488 BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. [x] GUR 4 PI ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. =(no ina!) lut-hu-a-uš KÁ [m]ŠEŠ[meš]-MU A-šú šá [md]+AG-it-tan-nu
3. ÚS.SA.DU ŠE.NUMUN NÍG.GA [d]URAŠ u(text: DIŠ)
4. šá 1 GUR ZAG.LU ina lut-hu-a-uš KÁ
5. [xx(x)]-[rzi?-im-mu šá ÚS.SA.DU
6. [...] [md]+EN-zi?-i[m]-mu

Remainder broken away

rev. 1'. [xxx] ina IGI [md]+EN-MU
2'. ù [md]+AG-it-tan-nu u [md]+EN-ik-ṣur-šú.
3'. ZÚ.LUM.MA-' a-na [md]+EN-MU i-nam-din
4'. [lú]mu-kin [m]GIN-MU A-šú šá [md]AMAR.UTU-MU
5'. [m]at-kal A [m]ÌR-[d]mul-le-šú
6'. [lú]UMBISAG [md]UTU-MU A-šú šá [md]+EN-MU
lo.e. 7'. dil-bat[ki] [iti]KIN U_4.12.KAM
8'. MU.34.KAM [m]da-ri-muš
9'. [LUGAL TIN].TIR[ki] LUGAL KUR.[KUR]

Translation

[x];4 kor(s) of dates, estimated yield, of (a palm grove) in Lut-hu-a-uš, sector of Ahhē-iddina s. of Nabû-ittannu, adjacent to the arable land, property of Uraš; and of one kor, estimated yield in Lut-hu-a-uš in the sector (of) [xx(x)]-[rzi?-im-mu, which is adjacent to [the property of ...] Bēl-zi?-i[m]-mu. [... are charged against PN?....] at the disposal of Bēl-iddina, <<and>> Nabû-ittannu and Bēl-ikṣuršu. He will deliver the dates to Bēl-iddina.

Witnesses: Kīn-šumi s. of Marduk-iddina (and) Atkal s. of Ardi-Mullēšu; scribe: Šamaš-iddina s. of Bēl-iddina; Dilbat, date.

Remark

2a, 4b – apparently a microtoponym (subject to collation).

1.3.3.2. BM 103385-104394 = 1911–4–8, 75–1084 (bought from J.E. Gejou)

1. BM 103497 – Dilbat is mentioned in the text, date not preserved, perhaps early NB in view of the filiation format PN_1 A PN_2. The damaged deed is a protocol of a litigation before witnesses. It is about silver (sums of over one mina and of 15 shekels are recorded in a damaged context). The verbal form *ú-še-el-li* and the term *hadūtu* ("joy", i.e. "free will") perhaps hint that an oath was taken by the parties, but the formula is not preserved. Several given names are preserved in the operative section, notably Nabû-rē'išunu, Bēl-ibni, Nabû-lē'i, Lā-abâši and perhaps Qatnāyu, but no filiations. Therefore an archival classification is impossible.

'obv'. 1. [lú]mu-ki-né-e šá IGI-[šú-nu]
2. [m]xx [md]+AG-SI[PA?]-šú-n[u ...]
3. [uru]xxxx nu [x] -ú [lú]mu?-[...]
4. [x]+1 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR šá [rm]xx[l]
5. [...] [md]+EN-DÙ [md]+AG-DA iš-[ršu-ú
6. [...] [rl]x [md]+EN-DÙ aq-bi si-x
7. [...] x na šá x KÙ.BABBAR
8. [...] x mu [rx][rl] x [m]la-ba-ši
9. [...][rl] x-ma 15 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR
lo.e. 10. [...] x pa ra x
11. [...] x ha-du-ú-ti
rev. 1. [...] x ú-še-el-li

[155] He recurs as a scribe in Dilbat, –.IV.32 Dar. I = 490 BCE (VS 6, 157, 19f,) as noticed by Weszeli.

2. [...] ⌜x⌟ šá xx
3. [...] A ^{md}+AG-PAP-MU
4. [...]-xx A ^{md}+AG-GI
5. ^{md}+AG-LUGAL-ŠEŠ^{meš}-šú A ^{m}[...] EN.NUN KÁ.GAL?
6. ^{m}SUM-nu-nu A ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG ^{md}+AG-MU A ^{m}[...]
7. ^{m}šá-^{d}+AG-šu-ú A ^{m}MU-GI.NA $^{m⌜}$x⌟ [...A ^{m}...]
8. [(x)] ^{m}lib?-[l]uṭ A ^{m}ú-bar ([...])
9. [^{m}]^{d}+AG?-BA^{šá} A ^{m}ú-bar
u.e. 10. [x(x)]-bu?-tú šá dil-bat^{ki} ú⌟?-[...]
le.e. 11. [...] A ^{md}+x [...]
12. [...] x

Implicit witnesses: [...]/Nabû-aha-iddina, [...]-xx/Nabû-ušallim, Nabû-šar-ahhēšu /[...]([//]) Maṣṣar-abulli?, Iddinunu /Iddin-Nabû, Nabû-iddina /[...], Ša-Nabû-šū /Šuma-ukīn, ⌜x⌟ [...]/[...], Libluṭ?/Ubāru (or Ubār-[DN), Nabû?-iqīša /Ubāru. The function of [...]/[DN-...] (rev. 10-11) is not clear.

2. BM 103630– ductus early NB; letter from Arrabu? (ár-[ra]b?-bi) to Abi-kīn (AD-ki-ni) his equal ("brother"). Dilbat is mentioned.

3. BM 103612 – Dilbat, 12.X.12 Nbk. II = 592 BCE; promissory note for barley.

1. 2 (PI) 2 BÁN Š[E.B]AR šá ^{m}MU-GIN A-šú šá ^{md}?[x(x)-ṣir
2. ina UGU ^{md}+AG-MU-PAP A-šú šá ^{md}+EN-SUR
3. ina $^{i[ti}$x] ina SAG.DU-šú i-nam-din
4. i¬- [x] ⌜xx⌟ ⌜xx x x⌟
5. šá ina x SAG? ^{md}+AG-⌜MU?-x⌟ pa-a?-du
6. pu-ut e-ṭè-⌜ri⌟ šá ^{md}+AG-MU-PAP
lo.e. 7. ina SU^{II} ^{m}ba-la-⌜ṭu⌟
8. ^{m}MU-GIN na-ši
rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni
10. ^{md}UTU-[x]
11. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}ki-na-a
12. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}AB U_4. 12. [KA]M¬
13. MU.12. KAM ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-PAP
14. LUGAL E^{ki}

Translation

0;2.2 kor of barley of Šuma-ukīn s. of [DN?-x(x)]ṣir is charged against Nabû-šuma-uṣur s. of Bēl-ēṭir. In month [x] he will deliver (it) in its original amount. For the full payment (delivery) by Nabû-šuma-uṣur Balāṭu assumes guarantee from Šuma-ukīn.

Witness Šamaš-[x] and the scribe Kīnâ; Dilbat, date.

Remark

7-8. The formulation is confused: one would expect ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}MU-GIN
$^{8.m}$ba-la-⌜ṭu⌟ na-ši.

4. BM 103686 – Dilbat (in text), 10.VIII.29 Nbk. II = 576 BCE; administrative receipt for dates

1. 28 GUR 4 PI 3 BÁN
2. ZÚ.LUM.MA la ga-ma-ru-tu
3. ina dil-bat^{ki} ^{md}AMAR.UTU-MU-MU
4. ^{lú}A šip-ri šá ^{m}NUMUN-DÙ
5. ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}šu-la-a ^{m}NUMUN-ia
lo.e. 6. ^{m}LÚ-DINGIR.GAL u ^{m}tab-né-e-a
7. U_4. 10. KAM šá ^{iti}APIN
rev. 8. MU.29. KAM ^{d}PA-NÍG.DU-⌜P[AP]
9. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
10. ma-hir

Translation

Marduk-šuma-iddina (or -nādin-šumi), messenger of Zēra-ibni, received 28;4.3 kors of dates (not the full amount) from Šulâ, Zērīya, Amīl-Ištarān and Tabnēa in Dilbat; date.

5. BM 103596 – Dilbat, 23.XI.42 Nbk. II = 562 BCE; a very damaged deed. The only preserved information in the operative section is about day [x+?]8 of month XI and about a quantity of barley (1;3 kor). Witnesses: MU-[xx] ⌜⌞x/Nabû-ahhē-iddina and Marduk?-n[a?-x]/Marduk-ēṭir; and the scribe Uraš-kīn-zēri/Lā-ga[mal-x]; Dilbat, date.

1. [xx U_4 (xx+?)] 8 KAM šá ^{iti}ZÍZ
2. [...] ⌜xx⌟ [...]

remainder almost entirely destroyed

rev. 1. traces
2. [...]
3. .[...]
4. 1 GUR 3 PI ŠE.BAR [...]-bi
5. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}MU-[xx]⌜⌞x
6. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-PAP^{me}-MU $^{md⌜}$ŠÚ⌟? -n[a?-x]
7. A-šú šá ^{md}AMAR.UTU-SUR u ^{lú}UMBISAG
8. ^{md}URAŠ-GIN-NUMUN A-šú šá ^{md}la-ga-[mal-x]
9. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ZÍZ U_4. 23.KAM
u.e. 10. MU.42. KAM ^{md}+AG-NIG2.DU-[URÙ/PAP]
11. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

6. BM 103484 – crème to brown, 51 x 36 x 20 mm.; obv. very damaged (a few scattered signs); Dilbat, 6⌟[+x?].I.6 Nbn. = 550 BCE; unclassified deed: only Bēl-ibni (^{d}+EN-DÙ), part of a filiation is recognizable in the operative section. Witness: Zēra-uṣur/Nabû-kēšir//Mudammiq-Adad and the scribe Tabnēa /Nabû-ahhē-iddina// Atkuppu; Dilbat, date.

Postscript (damaged): Uraš-šuma-uṣur [...[.

1. ⌜2 (or A⌟) x⌟⌜x¬[...] ⌜x x¬⌟[x]
2. [...] a ⌜x ¬

3. [...] ⌜x⌟-du? ⌜xx]
4. [^{m}]^{d}+EN-DÙ x¬ [...] ⌜⌟A? A
5. [x] ⌜x⌟ ⌜x⌟ [...]
6. [...] ⌜x(x)-im?
lo.e. entirely effaced (if inscribed)
rev. 7 . [^{lú}mu]-⌜k[in-n]u ^{m}NUMUN-ÙRU
8. ⌜A-šú⌟ šá ^{md}+AG-ke-šìr
9. A ^{m}mu-SIG$_{15}$-^{d}IŠKUR ^{lú}UMBISAG
10. ^{m}tab-né-e-a A-šú šá ^{md} +AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU⌟
11. A ^{lú}AD.GUB$_{5}$ dil-bat^{ki}
12. ^{iti}BÁR U$_{4}$.⌜6⌟ [+x?).KAM
u.e. 13. ⌜MU.6.KAM [(^{m})^{d}+AG]-I
14. L[UGAL TIN.TI]R^{ki}
le.e 15. [(xx) ^{md}UR]AŠ-MU-ÙRU
16. [...]⌜x⌟

7. BM 103629 – eroded and very damaged. Dilbat, 26.XI.2 Dar. I = 519 BCE; promissory note for silver (at least four shekels) owed by x-Nergal (^{d}U.GUR) s. of Nabû-šuma?-uṣur (^{d}+AG-MU?- ÙRU?) desc. of Ea-ibni (^{d}IDIM-DÙ) to a son of Bēl-iddina (also with a three-tier filiation). The damaged witnesses list has no complete filiations, but only [...] desc. of Ēpeš-ili (DÙ^{eš}-DINGIR) and [...] s. of Rēmūtu (re-mut). The scribe is xx s. of Nabû-šuma-uṣur (^{d}+AG-MU-ÙRU) desc. of Ea-ibni (^{d}IDIM-DÙ). He may be a brother of the debtor or the debtor himself.

8. BM 103501 (marked as BM 103502 in the box of BM 103501, acquisition 1911–4–8–191), crème, 59 x 46 x 22 mm.; Dilbat, 28.X?.13 Art. (presumably I in view of the format and the lack of seal impressions), i.e. 454 BCE; promissory note for barley, property of Mulliltu (i.e. of her shrine)

1. 1 GUR 2 (PI) 3 BÁN ŠE.BAR NÍ[G.G]A ^{d}NIN.LÍL
2. šá ^{f}ba-zi-tu$_{4}$ DUMU.MUNUS šá ^{md}+AG-EN-šú-nu
3. ⌜ina⌟ UGU^{hi} ^{m}ap-la-a A-šú šá ^{m}tar-ti-bi
4. [ina] ⌜⌟^{iti}GU$_{4}$ ŠE.BAR-a$_{4}$ 1 GUR 2 (PI) 3 BÁN
5. [ina TIL-t]i? ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din
6. [e-lat] ú-ìl-tì IGI-tu$_{4}$ šá ^{f}ba-zi-tu$_{4}$
7. šá ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}ap-la-a e-ṭir-tu$_{4}$
8. ši-i
rev. 9. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ap-la-a A-šú šá
10. ^{m}ú-ba-ri ^{md}+EN-it-tan-nu
11. A-šú šá ^{m}EN-šú-nu
(space)
12. ^{m}ni-⌜din¬-ti- ^{d}+EN ^{lú}UMBISAG A-šú šá ^{md}IDIM-A-MU
13. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}⌜AB⌟ (? more likely than BÁR) U$_{4}$. 28. KAM MU.13. KAM
14. ^{m}⌜ár⌟-tak-šat-s[u] ⌜LUGAL¬ KUR.KUR

Translation

1;2.3 kor of barley, property of Mulliltu of (= administered by) Bazītu d. of Nabû-bēlšunu charged against Aplâ s. of Tartību. In month II he will deliver the aforementioned barley, 1;2.3 kor in its entirety, in Dilbat. Apart from a previous promissory note of Bazītu charged against Aplâ: it is fully paid.

Witnesses: Aplâ /Ubāru, (and) Bēl-ittannu /Bēlšunu; scribe: Nidinti-Bēl /Ea-apla-iddina; Dilbat, date.

9. BM 103534 – damaged; adm. (account of barley?); perhaps from Dilbat in view of the occurrence of Harru-ša-Lā-gamal; no date

1. [...š]á? ^{m}na-ba-a
2. [...] ⌜⌟x¬ ŠE.NUMUN šá KI KÁ šá UGU
4. [...]-⌜ku-pi
5. [...har]-ri šá ^{d}la-ga-mil
6. [...] URU šá ^{m}re-mut
7. [...] ⌜KÁ^{meš} šá UGU har-ri šá ^{d}la-ga-mil
8. [...] KÁ^{meš} šá UGU har-ri
9. [...^{m}]^{d}+AG-PAP ^{m}MU-MU A ^{md}+AG-MU-GIN?
lo.e. 10. [..U]GU har-ri šá ^{md}+AG-SUR
11. [...]-⌜ma ul e-mid ^{m}TI[N]-su A ^{md}+AG?-x (squeezed on e.)
12. [...] ^{m}man-ki-i-ia x šá ^{d}XV?
rev. 13. [...$^{h]i.a}$ 20 GUR ul [i]-nam-din
14. [...UG]U har-ri šá DÙ-⌜ŠEŠ⌟? ul e-mid
15. [...x+?] 20 GUR ^{m}re-mut
16. [...] A-šú šá ⌜x⌟-ŠEŠ ul e-mid
17. [...] šá É ^{lú}ŠU.KU$_{6}$ AN DA NI
18. [...] šá NAM šá GARIM?^{meš} AN DA NI
19. [...^{m}]^{dr}IDIM-DINGIR-ta-DÙ
u.e. 20. ⌜⌟x-ta-ni

Prosopography

Nabâ (na-ba-a, 1); Nabû-nāṣir (^{d}+AG-PAP, 9); Šuma-iddina (MU-MU)/Nabû-šuma-ukīn? (^{d}+AG-MU-GIN?, 9); Balāssu (TI[N]-su)/Nabû? (^{d}+AG?)-x (11); Rēmūtu (re-mut, 15); Ea-ilūta-bani (^{d}IDIM- DINGIR-ta-DÙ, 19); Bā'iru clan (É ^{lú}ŠU.KU$_{6}$, 17).

10. BM 103542 – Dilbat (place of delivery), date lost; fragmentary promissory note for barley.

1. [1 GUR] ⌜⌟3 (PI) 2 BÁN ŠE.BAR šá ^{md}+EN-E?
2. [A-šú šá ^{m}]⌜MU (or ŠEŠ)-x⌟-^{d}+EN (or AG) ina UGU^{hi}
3. [xxx] .. (damaged!)
4. [ina ^{iti}G]U$_{4}$ ŠE.BAR-a$_{4}$
5. 1 GUR 3 (PI) 2 BÁN
6. [ina 1+et] rit-tu$_{4}$ ina dil-bat^{ki} i-⌜nam?-din⌟?
7. [ŠE.B]AR hu-bu-ut-ta-tu$_{4}$
8. [x] ⌜xx⌟ šá ^{m}KAR-^{d}+EN

rev. entirely destroyed

Translation

1;3;2 kor of barley of Bēl-iqbi? s. of Iddin (or Uṣur)-x-Bēl (or Nabû) charged against [xxx]. In month II he will deliver the aforementioned barley, 1;3;2 kor, in one installment in Dilbat. The barley is a loan without interest ... of Mušēzib-Bēl.

1.3.3.3. Other BM collections

Zadok 2004: 333-334:BM 134969 - Dilbat, 12.IV.12 Npl. = 614 BCE; gardening contract for the duration of five years.

Lā-abâši (la-ba-ši)/Nādinu (²na-din), owner (and lessor) of 0;1 kor of arable land (a palm grove) in the area above the city (*muhhi-āli*) adjoining the property of Imbâ (im-ba-a)/Kīnâ (ki-na-a). Lā-abâši gave it for gardening for five years. He assumes responsibility for the work which the lessee (gardener) Balāssu(ba-laṭ-su)/Nabû-ahhē-bulliṭ (^{d}+AG-PAP^{me}-TIN) will perform and for whatever is due on it. He will have one third of the usufruct of whatever grows in the palm grove. The violator will repay ten shekels of silver.

Witnesses: Bēl-zēri (^{d}+EN-NUMUN)//Šangû-Dilbat(^{lú}SANGA dil-bat^{ki}) and Gula-zēra-ibni(^{d}gu-la-NUMUN-DÙ)/Ninurta-aha-iddina (^{d}MAŠ-PAP-MU); and the scribe Nabû-nādin-ahi (^{d}+AG-na-din-ŠEŠ)// Bēl-eṭēru (^{17}.EN-e-ṭè-ru).

1.3.3.4. Horn Archaeological Museum

1. HAM 73.0827 – beige, 41 x 25 x 9 mm., chipped off; obv. lost except for the first line; Dilbat, 23.IV.4 Nbn. = 552 BCE; fragmentary deed concerning silver.

1. ⌜4 GÍN⌟ KÙ.BABBAR šá ^{m}mu-še-z[ib...]
rev. 1'. [^{m}]^{d}U.GUR-SUR A-šú šá ^{md}¬[...]
2'. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}mu-šal-lim-^{d}[...]
3'. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN- ŠEŠ-MU A ^{m}ar-[...]
4'. dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ŠU U_4.23.[KAM ...]
5'. MU.4.KAM ^{md}+AG-I¬ [LUGAL]
6'. TIN.TIR⌜k[i]

Translation

Four shekels of silver of Mušēzib(-)...].

[Witnesses: ....]; Nergal-ēṭir /[DN-...]; and the scribe Mušallim-[DN]/Bēl-aha-iddina //Ar-[...]; Dilbat, date.

2. HAM 73.3071 – 44 x 38 x 20 mm.; rev. mostly eroded; Dilbat, 10.VI?.10 [+x] Nbn. (sometime between 546 and 539 BCE); promissory note for barley.

1. ⌜2⌟ PI ŠE.BAR šá ^{m}DINGIR^{m}[^{eš}]-ú-lu-ni¬?
2. A-šú šá ^{m}LUGAL-BÀD UG[U ^{m}]⌜⌞^{d}URAŠ-SU
3. A-šú šá ^{md}UTU-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU ⌜A ^{lú}AŠGAB
4. ina ^{iti}GU_4 ŠE.BAR gam-mir-tu_4
5. ina dil-bat^{ki} i-nam-din
6. [^{m}] ⌜⌞^{d}URAŠ-SU ⌜xx⌟ e-l[at?...]
lo.e. 7. [x]- ⌜⌞x-ma šá U_4.10.KAM šá [...]
rev. (lines 12-15 are severely damaged) 8. x x xxx xxx (mostly illegible) [...]
9. [...] A-šú šá ^{m}[...]
10. [...] šá ^{md}+EN-⌜MU
11. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+EN-[M]U? A-šú šá ^{m}⌜xx⌟ (illegible traces)
12. dil-[bat^{ki}] ^{iti}KIN? [U]$_4$.10.KAM
13. [MU].10(+x) KAM
14. [^{d}+A]G-I LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
u.e. 15. (traces)

Translation

0;2 kor of barley of Ilī-uluni? s. of Šarru-dūru charged against Uraš-erība s. of Šamaš-ahhē-iddina desc. of Aškapu . In month II he will deliver the barley, full amount, in Dilbat . Uraš-erība ... 10th day of [MN]

Witnesses: one entirely lost filiation and another one where only one segment is preserved, viz. Bēl-iddina (presumably the paternal name); and scribe (only the given name, viz. Bēl-iddina?, is preserved); Dilbat, date, and an entirely broken postscript.

3. HAM 73.3013 (obv. damaged) – 34 x 29 x 15 mm.; Dilbat, 26.VIII.2 Cyr.? = 537? BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 2 [+x? GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG..]
2. šá ^{m}ba (or ma)-gi¬?-ru? [A]-šú šá ^{m}[x(x)]-ru?
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU
4. A-šú šá [^{m}x] ⌜⌞x¬ A ^{m}ba (or ma)-š[u?-(x)]
5. ina ^{iti}DU[$_6$ Z]Ú.LUM.MA
6. gam-ru-tú ina dil-bat^{ki}
lo.e. 7. i-nam-din
rev. 8. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}+AG-MU-DÙ
9. A-šú šá ^{m}EN-šú-nu A ^{m}se-ki-ri
10. ^{md}+EN-MU A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-PAP
11. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}URAŠ-DUB-NUMUN
12. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-MU-GAR^{un}
13. A ^{lú}ŠU.KU_6 dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}APIN
14. U_4.26.KAM MU.2.KAM
u.e. 15. ^{m}ku-⌜ráš⌟? LUGAL E^{ki}
16. [LUGAL KU]R.K[UR]

Translation

2[+x? kors of dates, estimated yield] of Bagiru? (or Magiru?) s. of [x(x)]-ru? are charged against Nabû-ahhē-iddina s. of [x]⌜⌞x⌝ desc. of Ba (or Ma)-š[u?-(x)]. In month VII he will deliver the dates, full amount, in Dilbat.

Witnesses: Nabû-šuma-ibni /Bēlšunu //Sēkiru and Bēl-iddina /Nabû-nāṣir; and the scribe Uraš-šāpik-zēri /Nabû-šuma-iškun //Bā'iru; Dilbat, date.

Remark

13. The month name must be wrong as it should precede month VII.

4. HAM 73.3020 – 48 x 38 x 16 mm.; obv. almost entirely destroyed (mostly ends of lines); Dilbat, 16.V.8 Cyr. = 531 BCE; unclassifiable deed. The operative section has only Kudurru (NÍG.DU) as segment of a filiation.

Witnesses: Nabû-ahha-bulliṭ /Ša-pī-Bēl? //Šangû-Šamaš? and Šulâ /Ib?-x//Basīya; scribe: Iddin-Uraš / Rēmūt-Bēl //Ir'anni.

1. ⌜xxxx⌟ (all illegible traces) [...]
2. [xx] ⌜xxxx⌟ (all illegible traces) [...]
3. ⌜xxxx⌟ A šá? [...]
4. [...] ^{m}NÍG.DU
5. [...] ⌜⌞x
6. [...] ⌜x
7. [...]
rev. 8. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-TIN
9. A-šú šá ^{m}šá-KA-^{d}+EN? A ^{lú}SANGA ^{d}UTU?
10. ^{m}šu-la-a A-šú šá ^{m}ib?-x(x) (both illegible)
11. A ^{m}ba-si-ia u ^{lú}UMBISAG
12. ^{m}SUM^{nu}-^{d}URAŠ A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+EN
13. A ^{m}ir-a-nu dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}IZI
14. U_4.16.KAM MU.⌜8⌝.KAM kur-raš (squeezed)
u.e. 15. [LUGAL E]⌜^{ki}⌟ [u/LUGAL KUR.KUR]

5. HAM 73.3281 – 33 x 28 x 15 mm.; Dilbat, 15.[before VII].2 Camb. = 528 BCE; promissory note for dates.

1. 1 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA šá ^{md}URAŠ-MU?
2. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}gu-zu-DINGIR
4. A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+AG ^{iti}DU$_6$
5. ZÚ.LUM.MA ina dil-bat^{ki}
6. i-nam-din
rev. 7. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{md}+EN-ke-šì[r]
8. A-šú šá ^{m}ba-ni-ia
9. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-it-tan-nu
10. A-šú šá ^{m}BA⌜^{šá}⌟-a⌟ A ^{md}IDIM-mit-lak
11. dil-bat^{ki} [^{iti}]⌜⌞x U_4.15.KAM
12. MU.2⌟.⌜K[AM ^{m}kam-b]u-zi-ia
u.e. 13. LUGAL E^{ki} u ⌜KUR.KUR^{meš}

Translation

One kor of dates of Uraš-iddina? s. of Nabû-ahhē-iddina charged against Gūzi-il s. of Ardi-Nabû. In month VII he will deliver the dates in Dilbat.

One witness, viz. Bēl-kēšir /Bānīya and the scribe Nabû-ittannu /Iqīšâ //Ea-mitlak; Dilbat, date.

6. HAM 73.2822, 48 x 42 x 20 mm.; Dilbat, 6.XI.1 Camb. = 528 BCE; promissory note for barley.

1. 1 GUR 4 PI ŠE.BAR šá di (5 wedges)-ir-x⌝ ⌜x⌟ (perhaps for NÍG.GA ^{d}+INNIN)
2. šá dil-bat šá ^{fd}NIN.GIR?-su?-x[(x)]
3. DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{f}a-šá-hi-⌜x⌝-a [(-xx)]
4. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}la-ba⌝-⌜ši A-šú šá ^{m}[...]
5. ina ^{iti}SIG$_4$ ŠE.BAR [...]
6. ina UGU^{hi} 1+et rit-tu$_4$ ⌜i⌝-na[m-din]
7. pu-ut e-ṭe-ru šá ŠE.B[AR(-')]
8. 1 GUR 4 PI ^{f}be-let-⌜su⌟-[nu]
lo.e. 9. na-šá-a-ta
rev. 10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{d}UTU
11. ^{m}BA^{šá}-a A-šú šá ^{md}URAŠ-ŠEŠ-MU
12. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}EN-šú-nu A-šú šá ^{md}+URAŠ-MU-Ù[RU?]
13. A ^{m}ba-bu-tú dil-bat^{ki} ^{iti}ZÍZ
14. U_4.6.KAM MU.1.KAM ^{m}kam-bu-zi-i[a]
15. LUGAL E^{ki} u KUR.KUR^{meš}

Translation

1;4 kor of barley of Ištar ? of Dilbat of (= administered by) Ningirsu? - x[(x)] d. of ^{f}Ašahi-⌜x⌝-a [(-xx)] charged against Lā-abâši s. of [...]. In month III he will deliver [the aforementioned] barley, 1;4 kor, in one instalment. Bēlessunu assumes guaranty for the full repayment of the barley.

Witnesses: Šamaš; Iqīšâ /Uraš-aha-iddina; scribe: Bēlšunu /Uraš-šuma-uṣur?//Bābūtu; Dilbat, date.

Remarks

1 *in fine* – cf. HAM 2864, 1.

10. The 1st w. is the god Šamaš; a deed from Sippar, 23 Dar. I is witnessed by Sîn and Šamaš (see Zadok 1998b).

7. HAM 73.2947 – 53 x 43 x 19 mm.; Dilbat, -.-.2 Camb. = 528/7 BCE; herding contract concerning three cows of Bēlessunu (^{f}be-let-su-nu) d. of Ardi-Nabû (ÌR-^{d}+AG) from 20.[x] onwards. The cowherds are Iddin-Uraš (MU-^{d}URAŠ) s. of Zērīya (NUMUN-iá) and Lā-abâši (la-ba-šú) s. of Nabû-ukīn (^{d}+AG-GIN). They are responsible for general caretaking and guarding of the cows. Muranatu (^{f}mu-ra-na-tu$_4$) is also mentioned.

Witnesses: Lā-gamal-zēra-ibni? ([^{d}l]a-ga-ma-al-NUMUN-ᵀD[Ù]?)/[...] and Lā-abâši (la-ba-a-šú)// Ir'anni ? (ir?-[aᵀ?-ni); scribe: Uraš-kāṣir (^{d}URAŠ-KÁD)/Iddin-Bēl (^{14}MU-^{d}+EN)//Maṣṣar-abulli ($^{[l]ú}$EN. NUN KÁ.GAL).

1.3.3.5. Princeton Theological Seminary

PTS 2334 light brown, 49 x 38 x 17 mm.; rev. severely damaged; Dilbat, -.-.11 presumably Npl. or Nbk. II = 615/4 or 594/3 BCE; promissory note for silver with interest paid in dates.

1. 10 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR SAG.DU šá ^{md}+EN-re-man-ni
2. DUMU ^{md}+EN-am-mu ina UGU^{hi}
3. ^{md}URAŠ-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU A ^{m}DINGIR^{meš}-ú-a
4. MU.AN.NA 1 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA
5. hu-bul-li-šú ^{md}URAŠ-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU
6. a-na ^{md}+EN-re-man-ni
7. i-nam-din
8. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni

rev. 9. ^{m}ᵀx¬[...] ᵀ^{lú} SANGA É it-tú? (on edge)
10. [^{m}... A ^{m}...]-ᵀ$_{\llcorner}$ ^{d}URAŠ
11. ^{m}?[... A ^{m}l]a-ba-ši
12. [...]-an-ta
13. ù [^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}...] ᵀ$_{\llcorner}$x-MU
14. ^{m}šá-^{d}+A[G-š]u-ᵀú ([A?...])
15. dil-bat^{ki} i[ti...]
16. MU.11.KAM¬ [...LUGAL]
17. TIN.T[IR^{ki}]

Translation

Ten shekels of silver, original sum, of Bēl-rēmanni s. of Bēl-ammu charged against Uraš-ahhē-iddina s. (or desc.) of Ilū'a. Yearly Uraš-ahhē-iddina will deliver to Bēl-rēmanni one kor of dates, as his interest.

Witnesses (not a single complete filiation): x[...]// Šangû-É-it-tú?, [...]/[...]-Uraš, [...]/Lā-abâši (//?) [...]-an-ta; and the scribe [...]-ᵀ$_{\llcorner}$x-MU</>Ša-Nabû-šū. Dilbat, date

1.3.3.6. Smith College

SC 117 – beige, 61 x 46 x 21 mm.; eroded; Dilbat, 5 [+x?].I.17 [presumably Nbk. II or Nbn.] = 588 or 545 BCE. It is apparently a promissory note for silver (at least three minas), but other details of the transaction are not preserved. There were two debtors as can be deduced from the damaged mutual guaranty clause (line 7).

Witnesses: Uraš-aha-ušallim?/Rēmūt-Bēl, Bēl-ittannu /Nadnīya, Bēl-mīta-uballiṭ /Nabû-bullissu, and the scribe Ardīya /Rēmūt-x.

1. 3 (or 5?) MA.[NA ...]
2. šá ^{m}[...]
3. ina (or MAŠ?)[...]
4. u ^{m}[...]
5. mu? [...] ᵀxxx$_{\llcorner}$ (traces) [...]
6. ina É ^{m}[...]
7. 1+en pu-ut 2-[i na-šu-ú]

lo.e. 8. ᵀx$_{\llcorner}$ [...]
9. šá-nam-<ma> iṭ-ṭi-ir

rev. 10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}URAŠ-ŠEŠ-GI?-x¬
11. A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut-^{d}+EN ^{md}+EN-itᵀ-t[an-nu]
12. A-šú šá ^{m}nad-ni-ia ^{md}+EN-ÚŠ-ú-bul-[liṭ]
13. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-T[I]N-ᵀsu
14. ^{m}ÌR-ia ^{lú}UMBISAG A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut-x¬
15. dil-bat^{ki} iti^{ti}BÁR U$_4$.ᵀ5 [+x?.KAM]
16. MU.17.KAM ^{md}xᵀ [...]

17 (centred). LUGAL TIN.T[IR^{ki}...]

1.3.3.7. Yale Babylonian collection (including BRM)

1. NBC 8388 (Figure 2)– black, 50[+x] x 21[+x <more than 50%>] x 16 mm.; Dilbat, 10.II.4[+x] Nbk. II = sometime between 601 and 595 BCE; fragmentary deed concerning barley.

1. 83 GUR ŠE.BAR ZAG.LU [BURU$_{14}$ A.ŠÀ]
2. ᵀšá KÀ^{meš} šá ^{garim}ᵀšin (or ruq)-qu u a-ṣu-n[u]
3. [...] ᵀx šá$_{\llcorner}$ IGI-šú šá ᵀxx$_{\llcorner}$ [...]

remainder broken

rev. 1'. [...] ᵀx$_{\llcorner}$ [
2'. ᵀ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}pir'- A-šú šá ^{m}NUMU[N-...]
3'. dil-bat^{ki} iti^{ti}GU$_4$ U$_4$.10.KAM MU.4¬+[x?. KAM]
4'. ^{d}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU LUGAL TIN.TIR$^{[ki]}$
5'. i-da-šú u IN.NU i-na-áš-š[ú]
6'. [(^{d}x-)M]U (? or Š]EŠ?)-MU
7'. [...] MU?-iá

Translation

83 kors of barley, estimated yield of the [field] of the sectors of the irrigated areas of Šinqu (or Ruqqu) and Aṣūnu ... which is at his disposal...Scribe: Pir'u s. of Zē[r...]; Dilbat, date.

Postscript: He gave him [x] and will bring straw.

[(DN-)šu]ma? (or a]ha?-iddina, [...] Šumīya.

Figure 2. NBC 8388 (© Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection)

2. RBC 269 (Figure 3)– 43 x 33 x 19 mm.; Dilbat, 16. –.8 Nabû-[...] (presumably Nbn., in which case = 548/7 BCE); litigation.

1. lúr mu¬-kin-ni-šú<<-nu>> (the last sign is possibly partially deliberately erased) [šá ina IGI-šú m... A-šú šá]
2. md+EN-MU ⌜1⌟ GUR⌟? ⌜ZÚ.[LUM.MA]
3. a-na mdURAŠ-MU¬-⌜GIN [A-šú šá m...]
4. ú-ka-nu u ⌜2 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR a-na Š[ÁM (TIL-ti)]
5. ina ŠUII-šú mdURAŠ-MU-GIN ⌜ma-hi-[ir]
6. ki-i uk-[t]e¬-nu šá m⌜xx⌟ (both eroded and illegible) [(x)]
7. KÙ.BABBAR ZÚ.LUM.MA⌟ [(x)] ki zak-[...]
8. šá itiAPIN [Z]Ú.LUM.[MA...]
9. i-tur-ru ki-i la uk-[ti-nu . ..]
10. za-ki lúmu-kin-n[i]
11. mÌR-dME.ME A-šú šá mre-m[ut(-dxx)]
12. mdAMAR.UTU-[S]UR A-šú šá mdU.GUR-ni?-[x]
13. md+AG-ke-šìr A md+EN-⌜x⌟[(-x)]
14. ù lúUMBISAG md+AG-[...]
15. A-šú šá md+AG-NUMUN-DÙ dil-ba[tki itix]
16. U4.16.KAM MU.8.KAM d+AG-[...]

u.e. 17. LUGAL Eki

18. a-di U4.22.KAM šá iti[...]

Translation

His (less likely "their") witnesses [in whose presence PN] s. of Bēl-iddina assigns one kor? of dates to Uraš-šuma-ukīn [s. of PN] and Uraš-šuma-ukīn received from him two minas of silver as full price. If he appears as witness (testifies) PN is ... regarding the silver and the dates, he [will deliver] the dates in month VIII. He will [not] make claims again. If he does not appear as witness [...] he is free (from claims).

Witnesses: Ardi-Gula /Rēm[ūt (-[DN]), Marduk-ēṭir /Nergal-ni?-[x],, Nabû-kēšir /Bēl-x[(-x)], and the scribe Nabû-[...]/Nabû-zēra-ibni; Dilbat, date.

Postscript: Until the 22nd day of month [x].

Remark

18. Perhaps 22.VIII as the deadline for returning the dates (cf. 8–9).

3. MLC 525 (Figure 4)– greyish; 50 x 39 x 17 mm.; Dilbat, 15. –.5? [Dar. I?] = 517/6? BCE; partnership contract for cultivation

The plowman of Ṣillâ (ṣil-la-a) s. of Nabû-zēra-ibni (d+AG-NUMUN-DÙ), harnessed two oxen which Mušēzib-Bēl (mu-še-zib- d+EN) had given him for a share. Whatever he earns they have an equal share. The unbroken (up) field which Mušēzib-Bēl cross-plowed with the *mayyāru*-plow is half share of Ṣillâ. Amomg the other obligations are the cutting of weeds and paying of *šibšu*-tax to the owner of the field.

Witnesses: Zēra-ukīn? (⌞NUMUN⌟?-⌜GIN⌟?)/Nabû-zēra-ibni (d+AG-NUMUN-DÙ), br. of Ṣillâ (principal), Ša-Nabû-šū (šá- d+AG-šu⌟-[ú])/Nabû (d+AG)-⌜x]-⌜x⌟, and Nabû-šuma?-iškun (d+AG-⌜MU?-GARun)/[x]xx; xx-a/Rēmūt-Nabû (re-mut- d+AG)//[x]x-nu, scribe.

4. MLC 494 (Figure 5) – light brown, 43 x 33 x 16 mm.; (Dilbat and Babylon in text), no date; adm. record concerning silver.

1. KÙ.BABBAR šá ina pa-ni fku-n[u?-x]-⌜lu?
2. 3 MAŠ G[ÍN] ⌜xx¬ (illegible traces) šá šá?-[x]-ki
3. 2 GÍN m[...]
4. 2 MAŠ GÍN md+EN-MU A md+EN-¬x⌟
5. 2 GÍN mni-din-tu4 A [md]+EN?-PAPm[e-M]U
6. 1 GÍN šá iš-ka-ru
7. ⌜4⌞ GÍN a-na dul-lu4 šá dil-batki

lo.e. 8. ⌜4⌟ GÍN a-na dul-lu4 šá TIN.TIRki

rev. 9. PAP 1/3 GÍN 1 GÍN LÀti KÙ.BABBAR

Translation

Superscription: silver which is put at the disposal of fKun[u?-x]-lu?

(a) 3.5 shekels of x;
(b) Two shekels of [PN];
(c) 2.5 shekels of Bēl-iddina s. of Bēl-x;
(d) Two shekels of Nidintu s. of Bēl?-ahhē-iddina;
(e) One shekel for working material (*iškaru*);
(f) Four shekels for the work of Dilbat;
(g) Four shekels for the work of Babylon;

Total: 19 shekels of silver.

5. RBC 271 – light brown, 48 x 40 x 17 mm; no place and date, adm. list of quantities (commodity not preserved, very likely barley or dates) put at the disposal of individuals (one bears a name with the theophorous element Uraš, hence possibly linked with Dilbat)

1. 2 ⌜GUR ⌜2 [P]I ina IGI mdURAŠ-EN-⌜šú¬?-⌜n[u?]
2. 2 GUR 2 PI ina IGI mDÙ-⌜NUMUN⌟
3. 1 GUR 2 PI IGI mx⌟ [...]
4. 2 (PI) 3 BÁN ina IGI mlu-ú-[..]
5. 2 PI ina IGI mÌR-d+[EN? (or AG?)]
6. 1 PI ina IGI md+EN-[...]
7. 5 BÁN ina IGI mM[U-...]

rev. 8. [x (prob. 0]+ 4 GUR šá mÌR-ia? ([...])
9. 2 GUR šá mhaš-⌜da?-A⌟?+[A?...]
10. 24 GUR [...]
11. PAP 35 +[x GUR ...]
12. x-ia [...]

le.e. 13. traces

Figure 3. RBC 269 (© Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection)

Figure 4. MLC 525 (© Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection)

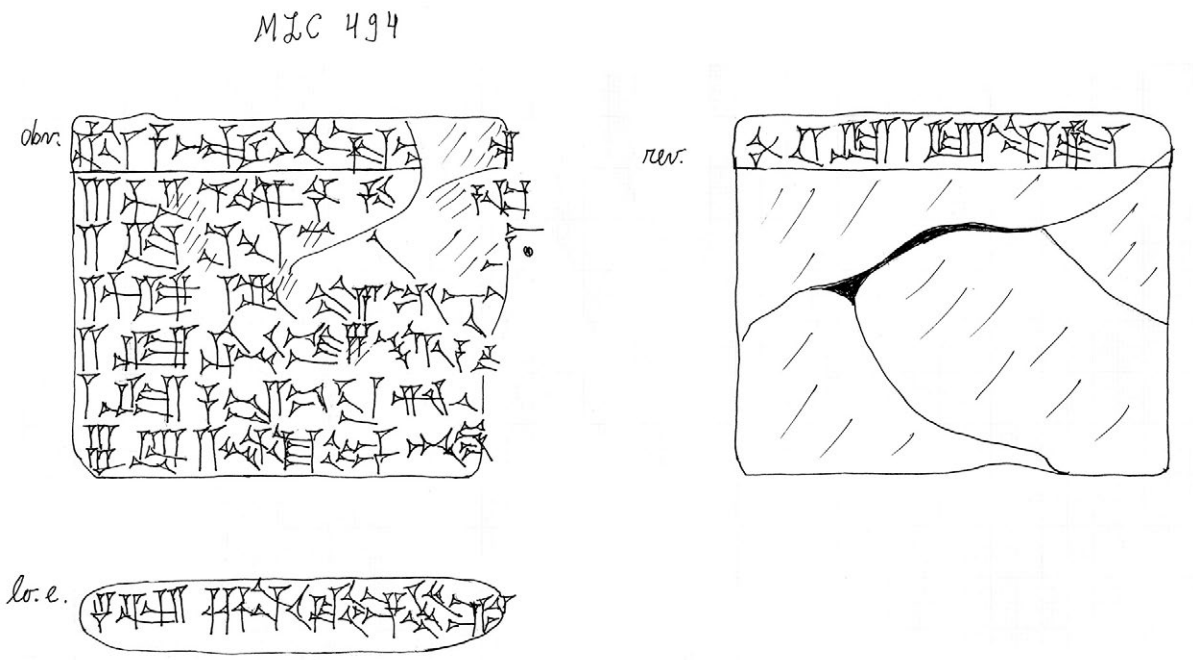

Figure 5. MLC 494 (© Courtesy of the Yale Babylonian Collection)

Translation

(**a**) 2;2 kors at the disposal of Uraš-bēlšunu?;
(**b**) 2;2 kors at the disposal of Bāni-zēri;
(**c**) 1;2 kor at the disposal of x;
(**d**) 0;2.3 kor at the disposal of Lū-[...];
(**e**) 0;2 kor at the disposal of Ardi-[Bēl (or Nabû)];
(**f**) 0;1 kor at the disposal of Bēl-[...];
(**g**) 0;0.5 kor at the disposal of M[U-...];
(**h**) 4 [probably +0] kors at the disposal of Ardīya;
(**i**) 2 kors of Hašdāyu?;
(**j**) 24 kors [....];

Total: 35 +[x kors...]

The total of the preserved ten individual entries amounts to 37;2.3 kors. It follows that on line 11 [x] = [2;2.3] kors.

6. BRM 1, 93 – damaged adm. record; no place and date (Dilbat and nearby Bīt-Dakkūru are mentioned in the text).

1. [...]-še ba (or ma)-tu$_4$ šá ^{md}+AG-PAP^{me}-SU
2. [...]-na-mu? at-ta-din
3. [xx] ina É ^{m}ki-di-nu
4. at-ta-din 17 MAŠ ina É da-ku-ru
5. at-ta-din MAŠ GÍN ^{lú}A.KIN
6. šá ^{m}ŠEŠ^{meš}-šá-a [it-t]a-din
7. ⌞1 GÍN⌟ ina dil-bat^{ki} at-ta-din
8. [^{m}xxx]⌞x A ^{m}MU-^{d}U.GUR
9. [it?]-ta-šú
10. [xx] KÙ.BABBAR a-na UGU
11. [^{m}xx Š]U? GÍN a-na
12. [^{m}]^{d}UTU-MU at-ta-din

Translation

(**a**) has "... of Nabû-ahhē-erība" and ends, like most of the following entries with the statement "I have given" (*attadin)*;
(**b**) [xx] I have given in Kidinnu's house (or Bīt-Kidinnu as a microtoponym);
(**c**) 17.5 shekels (of silver) I have given in Bīt-Dakkūru;
(**d**) 0.5 shekel (of silver) has been given by the unnamed messenger of Ahhēšâ;
(**e**) One shekel (of silver) I have given in Dilbat;
(**f**) [x] (shekel of silver?) was brought by [xxx]/ Iddin-Nergal;
(**g**) [Sum] of silver charged against [PN];
(**h**) I have given x shekels (of silver) to Šamaš-iddina.

2. Dilbat or Larsa

BM 103632 – presumably from Dilbat or Larsa, unassignable, travel rations (implicit) from 3.XI.26 until 8.X.27 Nbk. II or Dar. I = 578–577 or 495–494 BCE[156].

1. 1+en UDU.NÍTA a-na
2. ⌜^{m}ni-ir-ia-a-ma

[156] See Jursa 2010: 134 and Zadok 2014: 121.

3. ^{iti}ZÍZ U_4.3.KAM
4. ⌜1+en UDU.NÍTA a-na a-la-ku
5. šá KIŠI^{ki}
^{iti}ZÍZ U_4.26.KAM
6. 1+en UDU.NÍTA a-na É
7. a-na a-la-ku
8. šá TIN.TIR-ra
9. ^{iti}ŠE ár-ku-ú U_4.5.KAM
10. ⌜⌞x⌝-du tu-ur u_4-me
11. šá ^{iti}GAN u
lo.e. 12. ^{iti}ŠE IGI-ú
rev. 13. [1]+en UDU.NÍTA a-na É
14. [^{it}]^{i}GAN U_4.1.KAM
15. [(x)] MU.27.KAM
16. [x] UDU.NÍTA a-na
17. ^{m}ina-IM-^{d}+EN-ab-lu-uṭ
18. ^{iti}GAN
19. 1+en UDU.NÍTA a-na É^{ki}
20. a-na a-la-ku
21. šá KIŠI^{ki}
22. ^{iti}AB U_4.8.KAM

Translation

(**a**) One sheep for Niriyama, 3.XI;
(**b**) One sheep for the trip to (lit. "of") Kish, 26.XI;
(**c**) One sheep for the house(hold) for the trip to (lit. "of") Babylon, 5.XIIb;
(**d**)... day of months IX and XIIa;
(**e**) One sheep for the house(hold), 1.IX.27;
(**f**) [x (number)] sheep for Ina-šār-Bēl-abluṭ, month IX;
(**g**) One sheep (brought) to Babylon for the trip to (lit. "of") Kish, 8.X.

Remark

17. Cf. Ina-šāri-abluṭ.[157]

3. Two additional deeds of the archive of Akkad-ēreš and his sons[158]

1. MAH 16341 – crème, 43.5 x33 x 20.5 mm.; Bīt-Zēru-līšir, 21.VII.1 AmM. = 561 BCE; promissory note for barley
1. 3 GUR ŠE.BAR šá ^{m}ak-ka-da!-⌜KAM
2. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-za-kir
3. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}ar-rab-bi
4. < A-šú šá > ^{m}ha-am-ma-a 1 GUR 2 (PI) 3 BÁN (followed by a vertical scratch)
5. U_4.20.KAM šá ^{iti}APIN (line not completed)
6. i-nam-din ù 1 GUR 2 (PI) 3 BÁN
lo.e. 7. ina ^{iti}SIG_4 i-nam-din
8. pu-ut e-ṭè-ru
9. ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+EN na-ši
rev. 10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}re-mu-tu
11. A-šú šá ^{md}+EN.LÍL-MU-im-bi
12. ^{m}gi-mil-lu A-šú šá ^{m}TIN-su < > (deliberately erased)
13. ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}a-nù-GIN-A
14. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-GIŠ < > (deliberately erased)
15. A $^{m.lú}$NAGAR É NUMUN-GIŠ
16. ^{iti}DU_6 U_4.21.KAM
u.e. 17. MU.1 (AŠ).KAM LÚ-^{d}AMAR.UTU
18 (indented). LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
le.e. 19. a-ki-I ri-ik-su
20. SUR ^{m}ak-ka-da-KAM ..
21. šá ^{m}ár-rab (due to lack of space the scribe wrote the shorter sign and omitted the extra –bi) iš-pur(? ma+a)-ru (? squeezed on u.e, only two tiny verticals are discernible), perhaps the whole line is to be read iš-ma (both very clear!)-a, but this does not make much sense; does it stand for iš-šu-ú?

r.e. Two short horizontal scratches

Translation

Three kors of barley of Akkad-ēreš s. of Nabû-zākir charged against Arrabu s. of Hammâ : 1;2.3 kor he will give on 20.VIII and 1;2.3 kor in month III. Ardi-Bēl assumes guarantee for the full payment.

Witnesses: Rēmūtu /Illil-šuma-imbi and Gimillu / Balāssu; and the scribe Anu-kīn-apli /Nabû-zēru-līšir //Naggāru; Bīt-Zēru-līšir, date.

Postscript: Paid according to the contract <of?> Akkad-ēreš; that is what Arrabu brought?

2. SC 82 – beige, 54 x 43 x 18 mm.; Cutha, 27.VIII.0 Nbk. III = 522 BCE; sealed; receipt for silver and obligation to supply barley

1. 16 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ^{m}la-ba-a-ši
2. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-re-man-ni A ^{m}hu-xx
3. ina ŠU^{II} ^{m}ta-at-tan-nu A-šú šá
4. ^{m}A.GA.DÈ-KA[M m]a-hi-ir
5. ^{m}la-ba-a-ši ul-tu ŠE.BAR-'
6. 70 GUR 1+et ina IGI ^{m}ta-at-tan-nu
7. hu?-ṣu'- <<is-qí?>>
rev. 8. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{md}ÌR-^{d}+EN A-šú
9. šá ^{m}gi-mil-lu ^{m}ú-bar-ia (text MA)
10. A-šú šá ^{m}šal-la-la-ma (or ^{m}šal^{la}-la-ma)
11. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-NUMUN-GÁL^{ši}
12. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-iq-bi A ^{md}+AG-PAP-SU?
13. GÚ.DU_8.A^{ki} ^{iti}APIN
u.e. 14. U_4.27.KAM MU.SAG.NAM.LUGAL.LA
15. ^{md}+AG-NÍG.DU-ÙRU
16. LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki} <<eš>>
le.e. 17. seal impression

[157] VS 5, 13, 1.
[158] Cf. Zadok 1998a: 291–295; Jursa 2005: 149:7.14.1.1; Pirngruber 2014.

Translation

Lā-abâši s. of Nabû-rēmanni received 16 shekels of silver from Tattannu s. of Akkad-ēreš. Lā-abâši will place at Tattannu's disposal 70 kors out of the aforesaid barley in one (installment?).

Witnesses: Ardi-Bēl /Gimillu and Ubārīya / Šallalama; and the scribe Nabû-zēra-ušabši /Nabû-iqbi //Nabû-aha-erība? (^{d}+AG-PAP-SU?); Cutha, date.

Remark

7. One expects a verbal form here. The signs are carelessly written and should be re-collated. I hope that my rendering suits the context.

4. Texts from other places in central and northern Babylonia

4.1. Babylon and its region

1. BM 130836 – Babylon, archive of Rab-banê, 27.XI.15 Ššu. = 652 BCE; promissory note for silver with interest; very probably a later copy.

1. 1 MA.NA KÙ.BABBAR SAG.DU šá ^{m}NÍG.DU
2. DUMU ^{lú}GAL DÙ i-na UGU
3. ^{m}e-tel-lu DUMU ^{lú}GAL DÙ
4. šá MU.AN.NA a-na UGU 1 MA.NA-e
5. 8 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR i-rab-bi
6. ^{lú}mu-kin-ni ^{m}mu-ra-nu
7. DUMU ^{m}e-gi-bi

rev. 8. ^{md}é-a-DA DUMU ^{lú}GAL.DÙ
9. ^{m}ba-am-ma-a DUMU ^{lú}A.ZU
10. ^{m}la-qí-pi DUMU ^{m}AŠ-^{d}SUR
11. ^{md}+AG-ka-ṣir DUMU ^{m}im-bu-IGI-iá
12. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}BA^{šá}-^{d}AMAR.UTU DUMU ^{m}e-gi-bi
13. TIN.TIR^{ki} ^{iti}ZÍZ U_4.27.KAM MU.15.KAM
14. ^{d}GIŠ.ŠIR-MU-GI.NA LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}

Translation

One mina of silver, capital amount, of Kudurru desc. of Rab-banê charged against Etellu desc. of Rab-banê. One mina will accrue eight shekels of silver interest *per annum*.

Witnesses: Mūrānu //Egibi, Ea-lē'i //Rab-banê, Bammâ //Asû, Lā-qīpu//Ēda-ēṭir (AŠ-^{d}SUR, or Aššur in view of the -albeit misplaced- divine determinative?), Nabû-kāṣir //Imbu-īnīya; and the scribe Iqīša-Marduk//Egibi; Babylon, date.

Remarks

4f. The annual interest rate is 13.33%, which is within the range in late Sargonid Babylonia, viz. 10–25% *per annum*: a rate of 25% is recorded in Babylon in the same year.[159]

6. The 1st w. and the scribe belong to the same clan. The given name is common; he might have been identical with his namesake who is mentioned in Babylon in the same year.[160]

8. The 2nd w. belongs to the clan of the principals.

9. The signs BA and MA have distinct forms here.

12. The scribe's given name is not rare, therefore it is not beyond doubt that he is identical with Iqīša-Marduk /Nabû-zēru-lšir //Egibi, from Babylon (he did not act as a scribe), 22 years later.[161]

2. BM 108528 – Babylon, archive of Sutīya, 2.III.4 Camb. = 526 BCE; sale of a female slave.

1. ^{md}+AG-MU-GIN A-šú šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG A ^{m}su-ti-i[á]
2. ina hu-ud ŠÀ^{bi}-šú ^{fd}NIN.LÍL-si-lim ⌜qal-lat⌟-su
3. DUMU.MUNUS 5-ta MU.AN.NA^{meš} a-na 1 ⌜MA?⌟.[NA K]Ù.BABBAR
4. šá gìn-nu šá na-da-nu ù ma-ha-r[i a-na]
5. ^{f}GÉME-^{d}taš-me-tu$_4$ DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{m}[^{d}x-n/k]a-ṣir
6. A ^{lú}GAL DÙ a-na ŠÁM ha-ri-i[ṣ id]-d[in]
7. pu-ut si-hi-i pa-qir-ra-nu ⌜ÌR-LUGAL-ú-[t]u
8. u DUMU DÙ-ú-tu šá UGU^{hi} ^{fd}NIN.LÍL-si-lim
9. il-la-' ^{md}+AG-MU-GIN A-šú šá ^{m}MU-^{d}+AG
10. na-ši ^{fd}NIN.LÍL-si-lim

lo.e. 11. šá ^{f}GÉME-^{d}taš-me-tu$_4$ a-na KÙ.BABBAR
12. qu-up-pu-šú ta-bu-ku

rev. 13. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}SUM^{na}-a A-šú šá ^{m}BA^{šá}-a
14. A ^{m}ba-bu-tú ^{m}ÌR-^{d}U.GUR A-šú šá ^{m}kal-ba-a
15. A ^{md}XXX-šá-du-nu ^{md}UTU-A+A A-šú šá ^{m}MU-a
16. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{m}mu-še-zib-^{d}AMAR.UTU A-šú šá ^{m}re-mut
17. A ^{lú}ÌR-^{d}IDIM TIN.TIR^{ki} ^{iti}SIG$_4$ U_4.2.KAM
18. MU.4 (rather than 5; there is a vertical at the bottom, but such a combination is unknown) KAM ^{m}kam-bu-zi-iá LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
19. u KUR.KUR

Translation

Nabû-šuma-ukīn s. of Iddin-Nabû desc. of Sutīya of his own free will sold Mullittu-silim, his five-year old female slave, for one mina of marked (stamped) silver of the kind commonly used for transactions (lit. "of giving and receiving"), fixed price, to Amti-Tašmētu d. of [DN-k]āṣir (or n]āṣir desc. of Rab-banê. Nabû-šuma-ukīn s. of Iddin-Nabû assumes guarantee against (claims brought by) any person acting unlawfully, by a person with a vindication suit, (against a suit claiming) the status of royal

[159] According to VS 4, 5 (see Jursa 2010: 497–498).
[160] Cf. Nielsen 2015: 214, s.v.
[161] Cf. Nielsen 2015: 163, s.v. *ad* OECT 10, 398, 9, 18.

slave or of a free person with regard to Mullittu-silim whom Amti-Tašmētu transferred for her own silver (which had been kept) in her cashbox.

Witnesses: Iddinâ /Iqīšâ //Bābūtu, Ardi-Nergal / Kalbâ //Sîn-šadûnu, and Šamšāyu /Šumâ; and the scribe Mušēzib-Marduk /Rēmūtu //Arad-Ea; Babylon, date.

Comment

The price of one mina is comparable to the case of a female slave and a male one who were sold for two minas in the time of Nabonidus, i.e. just a few decades earlier.[162]

Remark

10f. *kaspu quppišu* – for *quppu* "cash box holding a woman's peculium."[163]

3. Mauer 1985: 212:RGZM 9.0.6165 – fragment, the obverse is eroded and the reverse has just traces; Babylon, unassignable, time of Camb.; apparently a promissory note for two minas and 40 shekels of hacked silver of 87.5% fineness, presumably for a share in a prebend. The filiations of the recognizable principals are damaged:

[xx]-MU?/Ardi-Marduk (ÌR-^{d}AMAR.UTU), Nabû-ahhē-iddina? (^{d}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-⌜MU⌟?), [xx]/Ardīya (ÌR-ia)//Sîn-ili (^{d}XXX-DINGIR)[164] and Nergal (^{d}U.GUR⌝)-[...].

4. CUA 59 – brown, 51 x 38 x 20 mm.; Nāru-eššu, archive of Sîn-šadûnu, 28.I.5 Cyr. = 534 BCE; promissory note for *šibšu*-impost.

1. 24 GUR ŠE.BAR šib-šú A.ŠÀ šu-pal
2. I_7 eš-šú šá it-ti ^{md}+EN-lu-sa-lim
3. šá ^{f}be-let-[s]u-nu DUMU.MUNUS-su šá ^{m}BA^{šá}-a
4. A ^{md}XXX-šá-du-nu ina UGU^{hi} ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-MU
5. A-šú šá ^{md}+AG-na-din-MU A ^{md}XXX-na-ṣir u ^{md}+EN-KAR-an-nu ^{lú}qal-la šá ^{f}be-let-su-nu
6. ina ^{iti}SIG_4 ŠE.BAR ina UGU^{hi} maš-kát-tu_4
7. ina UGU^{hi} 1+et rit-tu_4

8 (centred). i-nam-din-nu-'

rev. 9 (upside down, belongs to the operative section: = line 5b!)

10. ^{lú}mu-kin-nu ^{m}ka-ṣir A-šú šá
11. ^{m}I-^{d}AMAR.UTU A ^{m}SIG_{15}-^{d}IŠKUR ^{md}+AG-A-MU
12. A-šú šá ^{m}DÙ-iá A ^{lú}GAL ba-né-e
13. u ^{lú}UMBISAG ^{md}+AG-MU-MU A-šú šá
14. ^{m}KI-^{d}UTU-TIN A ^{m}na-an-na-A+A
15. I_7 eš-šú ^{iti}BÁR U_4.29.KAM
16. MU.5.KAM ^{m}kur-ra-áš-šú LUGAL E^{ki}

u.e. 17 (centred). LUGAL KUR.KUR [(^{meš}) x] ⌜x⌟

18 (tiny and damaged signs). ina IGI ⌜x⌟ ^{lú}ENGAR^{meš} (tiny signs) [(xx)]

le.e. 19. ŠE.BAR a-ba-ah-šin^{in}-nu

20. i-nam-di-nu-'

Translation

24 kors of barley, as payment of the tax of a field below Nāru-eššu of Bēlessunu d. of Iqīšâ desc. of Sîn-šadûnu (held) together with Bēl-lū-salim, are charged against Nabû-ahhē-iddina s. of Nabû-nādin-šumi desc. of Sîn-nāṣir and Bēl-ēṭiranni slave of Bēlessunu . In month III they will deliver the barley at the storehouse in one instalment.

Witnesses: Kāṣiru/Na'id-Marduk//Mudammiq-Adad and Nabû-apla-iddina/Bānīya//Rab-banê; and the scribe Nabû-šuma-iddina/Itti-Šamaš-balāṭu// Nannāyu; Nāru-eššu, date.

Postscript: At the disposal of x (number?) plowmen [(xx)]. They will deliver barley (and) green stalk.

Remarks

1. *šibšu* – impost delivered as share of the produce (harvest).[165]

3. Iqīšâ /Gilua //Sîn-šadûnu is mentioned in Evetts, *Nerigl.* 9, 1, 6.

19. For *abahšinnu* see *ad* 1.3.1.1, 3 above.

5. Mauer 1985: 212 and pl. 25:8 = RGZM 0.6164[166] – fully preserved, but the surface is damaged. Šuppatu (^{uru}šup-pat) on the Euphrates in the region of Babylon,[167] Egibi archive, 18.VI.2 Camb. = 528 BCE; promissory note for dates, estimated yield.

1. 23 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU šá
2. ^{m}GIN-^{d}AMAR.UTU A-šú šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}+AG A ^{lú}⌞A⌟-Z[U]
3. $BURU_{14}$ A.ŠÀ ^{giš}GIŠIMMAR^{meš} ^{m}KI-^{d}AMAR⌟.[UTU-TI]N
4. ina UGU^{hi} ^{m}DA-^{d}AMAR.UTU A-šú šá ^{m}na-⌞din⌝
5. A ^{lú}Š[U?.H]A?[168] ^{md}+EN-gi-mil-an-n[i]
6. ^{lú}qal-la šá ^{m}ÌR-^{d}AMAR.UTU A ^{m}ZÁLAG-^{d}⌞é?-a⌝?
7. 23 GUR ina ha-ṣa-ri ina ma-ši-hu
8. šá <1> PI a-na ^{m}KI-^{d}AMAR.UTU-TIN

lo.e. 9. [K]I 1 GUR bil-tu_4 šá hu-ṣa-b[i]

rev. 10. i-nam-[d]in-nu-' ^{lú}mu-kin-nu

[162] See Dandamaev 1984: 202, cf. 200–206 for more comparative material.
[163] Cf. CAD Q: 310a, s.v. *quppu* c.
[164] Cf. perhaps Ardīya /Nabû-uballiṭ//Sîn-ili (*Nbn.* 433, 8).
[165] See Jursa, *Landwirtschaft*: 82–83.
[166] The tablets were originally in Nördlingen since 1907.
[167] *Rép. Géogr.* 8: 297f. – same spelling as in *Dar.* 362, 18; 457, 17; 461, 16; || Wunsch, *Egibi*, 2: 145 and BM 32090 (Borsippean archive of Nūr-Papsukkal), and BM 31789 (dates).
[168] Mauer 1985: 212 reads ^{lú}SANGA] u (or just the end of HA). He does not recur in the Egibi archive. Is Nādinu /Nabû-bāni-ahi//Bā'iru (524 BCE, *Camb.* 317 = Wunsch, *Egibi* 2, 62, 15) his father?

11. md+AG-SIPA(followed by an erasure)-šú-nu A-šú šá md+EN-SUR
12. A mDINGIR-šú-AD-šú mgu-za-nu A-šú šá
13. mre-m[u]t A mda?-lib (or lul, nar, pah)-DINGIR
14. u lúUMBISAG mGIN-dAMAR.UTU A-šú šá mÌR-d+AG˻
15. A lúA.ZU urušup-pat itiKIN[169]
16. U$_4$.18.KAM MU.2.KAM mkam-bu-zi-˹ia¬
17. LUGAL TIN.TIRki LUGAL KURmeš

Translation

23 kors of dates, estimated yield, of Kīn-Marduk s. of Ardi-Nabû desc. of Asû, yield of a palm grove (lit. "field") – Itti-Marduk-balāṭu charged against Ile''i-Marduk s. of Nādinu desc. of Bā'iru ? (and) Bēl-gimilanni, slave of Ardi-Marduk desc. of Nūr-Ea?. They will deliver (the above-mentioned) 23 kors to Itti-Marduk-balāṭu in the enclosure in the measure of one *pānu* together with one load of firewood per one kor (of dates).

Witnesses: Nabû-rē'išunu/Bēl-ēṭir//Ilšu-abūšu, Gūzānu/Rēmūtu//Da?-lib (or lul, nar, pah)-ilu, and the scribe Kīn-Marduk/Ardi-Nabû//Asû (same as the creditor); Šuppatu, date.

Remarks

2. Occurrences of Kīn-Marduk/Ardi-Nabû//Asû are listed in Wunsch *Egibi,* 2: 276b, s.v. Mukīn-Marduk. He occurs for example in:

Cyr. 335 = Wunsch, *Egibi* 2, 132, 2' (Babylon, 4.I.9 Cyr. = 530 BCE) as the debtor (debt of 1 mina of silver and 24 kors of dates). The creditor is Itti-Marduk-balāṭu//Egibi as here. The dates are to be delivered in month VIII in the house of Bēl-gimilanni and the silver at the end of XII without interest. Kīn-Marduk's field in Šuppatu is pledged on behalf of the creditor Itti-Marduk-balāṭu//Egibi whose own field borders on the pledged property. Kīn-Marduk is the seller of a field in Šuppat. The field borders on that of the same Itti-Marduk-balāṭu, the buyer; presumably Babylon, –.VIII. – [Camb.: 529-522 B.C.].[170] He also acted as a witness.[171]

5f. Bēl-gimilanni is mentioned without filiation. Wunsch, *Egibi,* does not register other occurrences of his. Ardi-Marduk cannot be identified with any of the homonymous individuals listed in Wunsch, *Egibi*, 2: 276 (descendants of Ša-ṭābtīšu, Šangû-Ea, Kanik-bābi, Damqa and Amelû).

12f. Guzānu/Rēmūtu with this hapax surname is not listed in Wunsch, *Egibi,* 2.

4.2. Sippar (-region)

1. CUA 67 – crème, 74 x 54 x 27 mm.; probably from Sippar, no date; draft of a cultivation contract

1.[...A].ŠÀ tap-tu-ú ina bi-rit giš TIR
2 (mostly cracked). [...]˹xx˻ [xx] i-na ˹ŠE.BAR?¬ [(x)]
3. [xxx] ˹xx˻ UD.KIB.NUNki md+EN-MU mdAMAR.UTU-˹M[U (or NU[MUN]?)-˹x˻
4. [DUMU-šú šá] mú-bal-liṭ-su-dgu-la lúUMBISAGmeš ˹x˻[x]
5. [x-n]a? pu-ut <tap>-tu-ú a-na md+EN-na-ṣir DUM[U-šú šá md+EN-TINit]
6. [D]UMU lúÎ.ŠUR gi-né-e ù mdUTU-i-pu-uš DUMU ˹šá mx˻[x(x)]
7. id-di-nu-' mim-ma ma-la ina ŠÀbi il-la-' [ik-kal-lu-']
8. ina MU-[A]N.NA 1 GUR ŠE.BAR šib-šú A.ŠÀ a-na ˹NÍG.GA d[UT]U
9. a-di [1]+1-ta MU.AN.NAmeš i-nam-di-nu-'

rev. uninscribed

Translation

[...] Newly prepared field between a grove (*qīštu)*

... barley. ... Euphrates. Bēl-iddina (and) Marduk-šuma (or zēra)-x s. of Uballisu-Gula, the scribes [of Ebabbar ?] gave (it) to Bēl-nāṣir s. of Bēl-uballiṭ desc. of Ṣāhit-ginê and Šamaš-īpuš s. of x[x(x)] to prepare for cultivation. They will have the usufruct of whatever grows in it. Yearly they will deliver to Ebabbar (lit. the property of Šamaš) one kor of barley as a field tax. They will deliver it for (the duration of) two years.

2. BM 114792 – receipt for dates, Ṣumnītu?, unassignable, 18.XI.26 Dar. I = 495 BCE

1. ina ú-ìl-tì šá 3 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA
2. šá md+AG-SUR A-šú šá md+AG-A-MU
3. ina ZÚ.LUM.MA md+AG-SUR
4. ina ŠUII mÌR-dgu-la A-šú šá
5. mÌR-dHAR ma-hi-ir

rev. 6. [lúmu-kin-n]u mÌR?-dU.[GUR]
7. [A-šú šá m]ÌR-dEN mdxx
8. A-šú šá md+AG-ŠEŠ-MU md+AG-ku-lim?-a[n?-ni?]
9. A-šú šá mmu-ra-šu-u lúUMBISAG
10. mdHAR-MU A-šú šá mni-din-tu$_4$
11. uru.garimṣum? (8 instead of 7 wedges)-ni-tu$_4$ itiZÍZ
12. U$_4$.18.KAM MU.26.KAM
13. mda-ri-a-muš LUGAL NUNki

u.e. 14. u KUR.KUR

[169] Not DU6.KÙ as stated by Mauer 1985: 212; 2 Camb. is not intercalated according to Parker-Dubberstein.
[170] Wunsch *Egibi* 2: 133 = BM 31939 (copy in Wunsch, *Egibi*, 1: 259, 5, rev. 4').
[171] See Wunsch, *Egibi* 2: 168 *ad loc*.

Translation

Out of a debt note of three kors of dates belonging to Nabû-ēṭir s. of Nabû-apla-iddina, Nabû-ēṭir received dates from Ardi-Gula s. of Ardi-Bunene.

Witnesses: Ardi?-Nergal /Ardi-Bēl, DN-x/ Nabû-aha-iddina, Nabû-kullima[nni?] /Murašû, and the scribe Bunene-iddina /Nidintu; Ṣumnītu?, date.

Remark

11. The place is not recorded elsewhere. The deed is very probably from Sippar or its region in view of the names with the theophorous element Bunene and the collection which contains tablets from the Ebabbar archive.

3. CUA 68 – beige, 62 x 48 x 23 mm.; no place, 18.I.5 Nbn. = 551 BCE, adm. record of various containers (and, perhaps, one implement)

1. ul-tu ^{iti}BÁR MU.5.KAM
2. ^{md}+AG-I LUGAL TIN.TIR^{ki}
3. i-na MU.AN.NA 80 dan-nu
4. 24 nam˩-˹ha-ri 5 nam-zi-tu$_4$
5. ITI 30 ṣi-in-du-ú
6. 10 hu-us-su-ú 5 ta-lam-mu
7. [x]+2 né-sep-pi 1 ME ha-aṣ-bu
8. 20 ma-li-tu$_4$ 10 ˹mu-˹ra?˩-mu-ú

lo.e. 9. [^{m}b]a˩-la-ṭu u ^{md}UTU-SIG$_{15}$? ˹xx˩

rev. 10. ˹˩x ˹x˩ BUR? ni PAP a-na ˹xx˩

11. [^{m}] ^{d}UTU?-˹˩SIG$_{15}$?$^{[iq,?}$ i-nam-di-nu
12. ˹PAD$^{hi.a}$ i-man-da-du-’
13. [xx-^{d}+]EN a-na UGU^{hi} te-lit
14. u [xx]˹x 5 ˹^{giš}/ba/ma˩-’

(space)

15. ^{iti}BÁR U$_4$.18.KAM MU.5.KAM
16. ^{md}+AG-IM.TUK LUGAL E^{ki}

Translation

From month I of the 5th year of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, Balāṭu and Šamaš-mudammiq? will deliver every year:

80 vats, 24 receptacles, (and) five fermenting vats.

(Each) month (they will deliver):

30 earthen containers of one *ṣimdu* capacity; ten *hussû* -containers; five containers of standard capacity (sg. *talammu*); [x]+2 containers of standard size (for certain potable liquids); 100 small pots; 20 small bowls, ten implements (used in the fabrication of bricks)? ... all for ...

They will measure the rations [with?] [xx]-Bēl concerning the disbursal; date.

Remark

9. These containers are usually used by brewers of beer. Therefore it may be that Balāṭu is identical with Balāṭu/Bunānu //Iddin-Marduk, the brewer of Šamaš (Ebabbar) who is recorded in about the same time (1.IV.6 Nbn. = 550 BCE).[172]

5. Provenience unknown

1. BM 103607 – mostly eroded; place and date lost, unassignable,

deed for dates, estimated yield

1. 6 GUR ZÚ.LUM.MA ZAG.LU
2. KÁ maš?-la-tu$_4$ šá ÚS.SA.DU A.ŠÀ
3. šá ^{md}+AG-A-MU u ^{md}+AG-ŠEŠ^{meš}-[xx]

Remainder mostly eroded

Translation

Six kors of dates, estimated yield of (a palm grove in) Bāb-mašlatu?, which is adjacent to the field of Nabû-apla-iddina and Nabû-ahhē -[xx].

2. BM 103680 – tag with PN; unassignable

1. ^{f}a-mi-ra-a (< Aram. *ʿwyr’* “blind”).

[172] Cf. Bongenaar, NB *Ebabbar* : 213.

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Abbreviations used

Abbreviations (mostly of editions of cuneiform texts) are as in A.L. Oppenheim *et al.* (eds), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago and Glückstadt 1956–2010), unless otherwise indicated. The months in Roman numerals are the Babylonian. Abbreviated rulers' names: AmM. = Amīl-Marduk; Art. = Artaxerxes; Asb. = Assurbanipal; Bar. = Barziya; Camb. = Cambyses; Cyr. = Cyrus; Dar. = Darius; Esarh. = Esarhaddon; Kand. = Kandalānu; Nbk. = Nebuchadnezzar; Nbn. = Nabonidus; Nerigl. = Neriglissar; Npl. = Nabopolassar; Ššu. = Šamaš-šuma-ukīn. Other non-bibliographical abbreviations: adm. = administrative (document); Aram. = Aramaic; br. = brother; d. = daughter; desc. = descendent; f. = father; gent. = gentilic; gs. = grandson; JBA = Jewish Babylonian Aramaic; OIran. = Old Iranian; OSyr. = Old Syriac; s. = son; w. = witness; wi. = wife. Capacity measures are expressed using positional notation, e.g. 1;2.3.4 = 1 *kurru*, 2 *pānu*, 3 *sūtu* and 4 *qû*. References to secondary literature are relegated to the footnotes, except for the text editions with the ensuing remarks, where they are given in the main text (with few exceptions). References to the sources are not relegated to the footnotes. The 2nd component of a genitive compound toponym is given in the genitive if it is an appellative, but not if it is a proper name. The format of the filiations, viz. $PN_1/PN_2//PN_3$ = PN_1 s. of PN_2 desc. of PN_3. All the tablets transliterated in this chapter are horizontally oriented unless otherwise stated.

Images of the tablets are found on the web: CUA = http://cdli.ucla.edu, museum in Semitics/ICOR collections, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., USA; Columbia = USA; Columbia): http://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_ results.php? SearchMode=Text&requestFrom=Search&PrimaryPublication=&Author=&PublicationDate= &SecondaryPublication=&Collection=&AccessionNumber=&MuseumNumber=CULC+614 &Provenience=&ExcavationNumber=&Period=&DatesReferenced=&ObjectType=&Object Remarks=&Material=&TextSearch=&TranslationSearch=&CommentSearch=&StructureSea rch=&Language=&Genre=&SubGenre=&CompositeNumber=&SealID=&ObjectID=&ATF Source=&CatalogueSource=&TranslationSource

HAM: https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&requestFrom=Search&PrimaryPublication=&Author=&PublicationDate=&SecondaryPublication=&Collection=Horn&AccessionNumber=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=&ExcavationNumber=&Period=&DatesReferenced=&ObjectType=&ObjectRemarks=&Material=&TextSearch=&TranslationSearch=&CommentSearch=&StructureSearch=&Language=&Genre=&SubGenre=&CompositeNumber=&SealID=&ObjectID=&ATFSource=&CatalogueSource=&TranslationSource

PTS: https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&requestFrom=Search&PrimaryPublication=&Author=&PublicationDate=&SecondaryPublication=&Collection=Princeton&AccessionNumber=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=&ExcavationNumber=&Period=&DatesReferenced=&ObjectType=&ObjectRemarks=&Material=&TextSearch=&TranslationSearch=&CommentSearch=&StructureSearch=&Language=&Genre=&SubGenre=&CompositeNumber=&SealID=&ObjectID=&ATFSource=&CatalogueSource=&TranslationSource;SC: https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&requestFrom=Search&PrimaryPublication=&Author=&PublicationDate=&SecondaryPublication=&Collection=Northampton&AccessionNumber=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=&ExcavationNumber=&Period=&DatesReferenced=&ObjectType=&ObjectRemarks=&Material=&TextSearch=&TranslationSearch=&CommentSearch=&StructureSearch=&Language=&Genre=&SubGenre=&CompositeNumber=&SealID=&ObjectID=&ATFSource=&CatalogueSource=&TranslationSource

MLC, NBC, RBC = collections.peabody.yale.edu/search.

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THIRD PART:
THE DIVINE WORLD

Chapter 27: The meaning and sense of the Ugaritic Baal–Mot conflict narrative[1]

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Abstract. This paper reflects on the meaning of the conflict between Baal and Mot (KTU 1.4 viii–1.6 vi) in the Baal Cycle (KTU 1.1–1.6). It provides a detailed review of the story line in order to share with the reader our understanding of it. It thus attempts to define the place of the existing elements in the plot and to imagine how they may connect. It also examines the question of meaning and attempts to pinpoint the existential dimension of the narrative. An excursus examines the operation of ritual motifs in the story.

Keywords: Anat, Baal, death, life, Mot, mythology, nature, ritual, Shapash, Ugaritic.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the meaning of the conflict between Baal and Mot (*KTU* 1.4 viii–1.6 vi) in the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.1–1.6).[2] Early on we discovered that we first had to work out the details of the plot. Though the text is substantially preserved, gaps in the text make its reading difficult. Therefore, this paper became of necessity largely devoted to providing a reading of the narrative. We review the story line in some depth in order to provide the reader with our understanding of it. Because of the many breaks it is not always possible to be certain of the narrative development, but we attempt to define the place of the existing elements in the plot and to imagine how they may connect. After we have reconstructed the plot we turn to a question of meaning and attempt to pinpoint the existential dimension of the narrative. An excursus also examines the operation of ritual motifs in the story.

Our reading is informed by recent translations and editions of the text, though this is certainly not a philological or lexical study.[3] We provide references along the way so that readers can easily follow the text. These references, in parentheses in the text, include *KTU* text references (= Dietrich, Loretz, and Sanmartín 2013) followed by page number reference to Mark Smith's edition and translation in Parker 1997.

An overview of the story line may help the reader to follow our detailed reconstruction and interpretation of the narrative. Subsequent to a banquet that celebrates the building of a palace for Baal, to which Mot was not invited, Baal declares his kingship to Mot. Mot counters by saying that Baal should invite him to a future feast, at which he will consume Baal. As a result of this, Baal becomes afraid and submits to Mot, eventually entering the realm of Mot, i.e., the underworld. El learns of Baal's death and mourns, and Anat buries Baal. She then finds Mot and kills him. Eventually both Baal and Mot come back to life and engage in a final battle. Shapash intervenes, and Mot concedes Baal's power.

Baal's initial conflict with Mot

We now turn to our detailed examination.

After the building of a palace for Baal (*KTU* 1.3 iii 4–1.4 vii 56; Smith 1997: 109–138), which includes a celebratory feast (*KTU* 1.4 vi 38–59; Smith 1997: 134–135), Baal sends a message to Mot declaring that he has built a palace (*KTU* 1.4 viii 1–37; Smith 1997: 138–139; this scene begins in the lacuna at the end of 1.4 vii and continues in the lacuna after viii 1–37). The existing text includes only the beginning of a speech in which Baal says that he has built a palace. Smith says the lacuna after this "complete[s] Baal's proclamation of kingship to Mot" (Smith 1997: 139). It is not clear what Baal's motivation is, but it is a reasonable assumption to say that Baal is in some way asserting his power vis-à-vis Mot, who governs a realm not under Baal's authority.

[1] It is our honor and pleasure to dedicate this study to Professor Tallay Ornan, friend, student, and colleague. We hope that she enjoys our essay. We have learned much from Tali's studies of ancient iconography and greatly value her scholarship, judgments, and contributions.

[2] We do not include the study of the Baal–Yamm conflict that appears in the first part of the Baal Cycle (*KTU* 1.1–1.3; Smith 1997: 87–106) for substantial and practical reasons. We imagine that the overall text may be a conflation of two traditions, one dealing with Baal and Yamm and the other with Baal and Mot, with one perhaps modeled on the other (see the structuralist analysis that may point to this in Petersen and Woodward 1977). In addition, were we to include the whole Baal Cycle, this study would have become unwieldy.

[3] For some recent translations, see Smith 1997; Wyatt 2002: 34–146; Pardee 2003. The detailed text edition and commentary on the Baal Cycle by Smith 1994 (on *KTU* 1.1–1.2) and Smith and Pitard 2009 (on *KTU* 1.3–1.4) do not substantially deal with the Baal and Mot conflict (mainly in *KTU* 1.5–1.6), though the second volume (p. 583–730) does deal with the initial stages of the conflict described at the end of *KTU* 1.4.

The extant narrative resumes with Mot's response to Baal's messengers (*KTU* 1.5 i 1–8; Smith 1997: 141), a response the messengers then deliver to Baal (*KTU* 1.5 i 9–35; Smith 1997: 141–142). The two iterations of Mot's response allow a restoration of Mot's whole message (*KTU* 1.4 viii in the lacuna [at the end] to 1.5 i 8, and 1.5 i 8–35; Smith 1997: 140–142). In his response, Mot declares that, since his appetite is enormous, Baal should invite him to a feast.[4] Mot adds that he will pierce Baal and tear him in pieces. This will culminate in Baal's entering Mot's throat (i.e., Baal's death).

The nature and/or motivation for mentioning this invitation is unclear: we do not have enough of Baal's initial message to Mot (*KTU* 1.4 viii 1–37; Smith 1997: 138–139) to know if Baal had already extended an invitation and if Mot is responding to this. Some evidence later indicates that Mot in his response is the first one to mention an invitation. It might be thought that he knows about the previous feast in which the other gods celebrated Baal's palace (*KTU* 1.4 vi 38–59; Smith 1997: 134–135) and wants to be invited to a similar event. Nevertheless, at such a feast Mot will assert his power over Baal.

The text, after a short break, resumes with a statement that Baal will indeed enter into Mot's bowels (*KTU* 1.5 ii 2–6; Smith 1997: 143). It is not clear if this is part of a speech (by and to whom is unclear) or of the narrative. In any case, Baal immediately becomes afraid and tells his messengers to take another message to Mot to tell him that he is Mot's slave. Baal's message is short and complete in the text. It may be a deferential metonym for saying "Of course, I—your servant—will invite you, Mot, to a feast." But that Baal is afraid and that he says that he is a *permanent* slave (*'bdk . an . w d 'lmk* "I am your slave, and yours forever") indicate that he is submitting to Mot.[5]

Mot's immediate response to Baal's message may be read to mean that Baal has invited him (*KTU* 1.5 ii 20–24; Smith 1997: 144): "Mot rejoices ... 'Why [*ik* = /*'êka*/] is [Baal] inviting me.'" But Pardee (2003: 266) translates this with a future tense, taking *ik* as an emphatic adverb: "[Ba'lu] will indeed invite me."

That Baal has not yet extended an invitation (and therefore we agree with Pardee's translation of *ik*) is indicated by the very broken column that follows (*KTU* 1.5 iii; Smith 1997: 145). A few phrases are legible, which indicate that Baal is speaking and is planning to hold a feast and invite Mot: *dm . mt . aṣḥ* "so/indeed I will summon Mot" (lines 9, 25); other gods will be in attendance (lines 14, 15); sheep will be present (i.e., as part of the feast; lines 22–23). Baal appears to be speaking to messengers (lines 20–21), to carry this invitation to Mot.

The forty lines missing at the end of 1.5 iii and the beginning of 1.5 iv (Smith 1997: 146) may have contained the delivery of an invitation to Mot by messengers, Mot's response, his coming for the feast, and the description of the beginning of the feast. The extant part of column iv (*KTU* 1.5. iv 5–26; Smith 1997: 146–147) has someone asking where Baal is, Baal's arrival on the scene, and the gods eating and drinking (with typical feast description language). Mot is not mentioned in this part of the extant text, but that does not preclude that this is the feast that Baal holds for him.

Forty-five lines are missing at the end of *KTU* 1.5 iv and the beginning of 1.5 v (Smith 1997: 147). When the text resumes Baal is being told to descend to the underworld (*KTU* 1.5 v 4–17; Smith 1997: 147–148). It is not clear if this is part of the feast or belongs to a different context. The end of this speech is immediately followed by the scene about Baal and the heifer, without any indication that the feast is ending. It is also not clear who is telling Baal to descend to the underworld in *KTU* 1.5 v 4–17. Putting Baal in pits of the underworld (*KTU* 1.5 v 4–6; Smith 1997: 147), something the speaker will personally do, is what Anat later does with Baal's corpse (*KTU* 1.6 i 15–18; Smith 1997: 152). But it does not seem that she is speaking here. Perhaps El is speaking, especially because it is the type of instruction that requires substantial authority. Alternatively, it might be Mot. But this reading may require that the feast be in progress.

Baal's death

Baal's love affair with the heifer follows this speech (*KTU* 1.5 v 17–26; Smith 1997: 148). The passage is broken at the end and therefore its significance is not entirely clear. The result of the affair is that the heifer bears a son, whom Baal clothes. This may relate to the theme of succession, which is treated explicitly later (*KTU* 1.6 i 43–67; Smith 1997: 153–154). But Baal's heifer-born son does not appear in that scene (it is unlikely that *yd'-ylḥn* in *KTU* 1.6. i 48 [Smith 1997: 153] refers to the heifer-born son, if *yd'-ylḥn* is in fact a PN). The heifer scene is otherwise important for its geography: Baal makes love with the heifer "in the wild (*dbr*), in the field of *šḥlmmt*" (*KTU* 1.5 v 18–19; Smith 1997: 148). This is where Baal's corpse is found and whence Anat retrieves it (*KTU* 1.5. vi 5–10; Smith 1997: 149; *KTU* 1.5 vi 28–31; Smith 1997: 150).[6]

[4] Both Smith 1997: 142 and Pardee 2003: 265 translate consequentially: "*So* invite me ...".

[5] For a similar idiom for denoting a permanent slave in classical Hebrew, see Exod 21:6; Deut 15:17.

[6] Part of the reason that Baal feels a need to sire a child via the heifer may be that he was just commanded (by whom is not clear, see above) to descend with his existing children to the underworld (KTU 1.5 v 6–17; Smith 1997: 147–148).

About forty lines are missing between the heifer scene and the resumption of the text in column *KTU* 1.5 vi (Smith 1997: 148). When the text resumes, messengers are telling El that they had found Baal's dead body (*KTU* 1.5 vi 1–10; Smith 1997: 148–149). It is not clear what intervenes in the gap, but it would have to include (1) the end of the scene of the heifer and the birth of the son; (2) the death of Baal, (3) the messengers' finding Baal's body,[7] and (4) the messengers' going to El. If 10 lines are apportioned to each of these segments, that would account for the 40 missing lines. The crucial element here would be the death of Baal. Later Mot reflects back on his killing of Baal (*KTU* 1.6 ii 15–23; Smith 1997: 155–156). He says to Anat that he was out hunting in the *dbr* and *šd . šḥlmmt*, found Baal, and "I took him like a lamb in my mouth, like a kid crushed in the chasm of my throat" (Smith 1997: 156). The gap in the text here between the heifer scene and the messengers' announcement to El that Baal is dead presumably recounted Mot's killing of Baal, perhaps using some of the wording or motifs of *KTU* 1.6 ii 15–23 (Smith 1997: 155–156).

After the messengers inform El of Baal's death, El engages in mourning (*KTU* 1.5 vi 11–25; Smith 1997: 149–150). He descends from his throne, sits on the ground, covers himself with dirt, and cuts his skin. From a literary point of view, this can be seen as mimicking the suffering of Baal, his displacement from his throne, and succumbing to Mot (see the excursus). It indirectly indicates that Baal at his death, whatever caused it, entered the realm or power of Mot. As El says at the end "I will descend to the underworld after Baal" (*KTU* 1.5 vi 24–25; Smith 1997: 150).[8]

Immediately after El's mourning scene, the text shifts to Anat's hunting in the hills (*KTU* 1.5 vi 25–31; Smith 1997: 150). This is something she does of her own accord; El does not send her out to hunt. She comes to the *dbr* and *šḥlmmt* land and finds Baal dead. She immediately begins her mourning ritual, which continues directly into the next tablet (*KTU* 1.5 vi 31–1.6 i 8; Smith 1997: 150–151). Her behavior and words are similar to El's (though abbreviated).

Shapash comes to Anat, and Anat asks her to load Baal on her (Anat's) back, so that she can bury him (*KTU* 1.6 i 8–31; Smith 1997: 151–152). Anat takes Baal's body to the top of Ṣapan (*ṣrrt ṣpn)*, bewails him (*tbkynh)*, and buries him (*tqbrnh)*, "putting him in holes/caves of divine powers in the earth/underworld" (*tštnn . bḫrt / ilm . arṣ*, vocalized perhaps *bi-ḫurāti 'ilīma 'arṣa*; *KTU* 1.6 i 17–18; Smith 1997: 152). This fulfills in some way the speech about and to Baal earlier (*KTU* 1.5 v 4–17; Smith 1997: 147–148), in which an unknown speaker says that "I will put him in holes/caves of divine powers in the earth/underworld" (*KTU* 1.5 v 5–6; Smith 1997: 147).[9] Anat's burial activity is followed by the offering of multiple groups of animals of different species, 70 of each group (at least a total of 420; *KTU* 1.6 i 18–31; Smith 1997: 152).[10]

After her funerary offering, Anat goes to El saying that "Athirat and her children can rejoice ... because powerful Baal is dead ..." (*KTU* 1.6 i 39–43; Smith 1997: 152–153). This seems to be saying that with the performance of the burial, Baal is officially dead. No further mourning or ritual performances for Baal are performed. The life of the gods can return to normal. At this point, El tells Athirat to arrange for a successor to Baal (*KTU* 1.6 i 43–65; Smith 1997: 153–154). It is not clear if Athirat makes two nominations, *yd'-ylḥn*, line 48, and later Athtar, lines 54–55, or just the latter.[11] In any case, Athtar literally does not measure up to the job, and refuses the offer. Athtar's ascent and descent echo Baal's dethronement and reenthronement and El's similar performances in mourning (see the excursus).

After a gap of about 35 lines in the next column (*KTU* 1.6 ii; Smith 1997: 154), Anat looks for Baal. Encountering Mot, she demands that he return Baal (*KTU* 1.6 ii 4–23; Smith 1997: 155–156). Mot confesses to killing and eating Baal in the *dbr* and *šd . šḥlmmt* (lines 15–23). Mot gives no indication that he is going to fulfill Anat's request. Rather, after the passage of some time (including "months"), Anat kills Mot (*KTU* 1.6 ii 24–37; Smith 1997: 156). Poetically, she splits, winnows, burns, grinds, and sows him. Birds then come and devour him. The picture one gets from this development is that Baal is not expected to return.

Baal's rejuvenation and final conflict with Mot

The next column is also missing about 40 lines at its beginning (Smith 1997: 157). The extant text has El seeking a dream that is to indicate if Baal is still alive (*KTU* 1.6 iii 1–9; Smith 1997: 157). The last 10 lines of the missing 40 lines would contain the beginning of

[7] Are these hunters? Note that Anat later finds Baal while hunting, *KTU* 1.5 vi 25–28, Smith 1997: 150, and even Mot says that he goes hunting in this area and found Baal there, *KTU* 1.6 ii 15–23; Smith 1997: 155–156.

[8] The preposition "after" (*aṯr)* here does not necessarily imply rescuing/retrieving Baal, but dying like him.

[9] Note that the lines after these are directed at Baal, as the second person suffixes indicate, but the verb *ašt . n* appears to have a 3ms suffix "I will put him ..."

[10] In the earlier speech to Baal in which it is said that Baal would be put in the holes/caves of the earth/underworld, no consequent funerary offering is mentioned. Rather, the speech to Baal goes on to say that he, with his children and servants, have to go to a particular mountain, lift it, and descend to the underworld (*KTU* 1.5 v 6–17; Smith 1997: 147–148).

[11] Smith 1997: 153 (and 174, n. 182), translates *yd'-ylḥn* as a PN: "And Lady Athirat of the Sea answers: 'So let us make YD'-YLḤN king.'" Pardee 2003: 269 (with n. 245) translates: "The Great Lady, 'Aṯiratu of the Sea, replies: 'Must we not appoint someone as king (who) knows (how) sap flows?'"

the quest for an omen. It is not clear what the first 30 lines dealt with. If the double lines at the end of column ii (shown in Dietrich, Loretz and Sanmartín 2013: 29; Smith 1997: 156) mark the end of the scene of Anat killing Mot, then the beginning of column iii may have included something about the aftermath of Mot's death, including El being informed that Mot was dead. This may have included a description of Anat coming to El with this news, because, after getting a positive omen, El immediately tells Anat to take a message to Shapash (*KTU* 1.6 iii 22–24; Smith 1997: 158). Anat is thus already on the scene. Anat's presumed message to El about Mot's death would have led to El's seeking a portent. Perhaps the killing of Mot is to be perceived as an avenue for retrieving Baal.

El's dream is positive; he mounts his throne and declares that Baal is alive (*KTU* 1.6 iii 10–21; Smith 1997: 157–158). This declaration reverses the earlier abandonment of his throne and announcement that Baal had died (*KTU* 1.5 vi 23–25; Smith 1997: 150; see the excursus).

El immediately tells Anat to have Shapash search for Baal (*KTU* 1.6 iii 22–iv 24; Smith 1997: 158–160; there is no break between columns iii and iv). Shapash agrees.

The end of 1.6 iv is broken, with almost 40 lines unintelligible or missing. Column v has Baal back on his throne, taking vengeance on his enemies, or so it appears (*KTU* 1.6 v 1–8; Smith 1997: 160). The missing lines must have recounted Shapash's successful search for Baal, Baal's resuscitation, and his resumption of power.

If it is strange that Baal was killed by Mot in the wilderness, buried by Anat in the "earth" at Ṣapan, found by Shapash perhaps in the underworld (in the course of her daily circuit), and then came back to life, so Mot, having been killed by Anat, is now also alive. Seven years after Baal's return to his throne, Mot, in some undefined context, blames Baal for killing him. Mot demands that Baal deliver one of his (Baal's) brothers for him to eat, otherwise he will consume humans (*KTU* 1.6 v 8–25; Smith 1997: 160–161).

Another lacuna (of about 35 lines) interrupts the narrative (*KTU* end of 1.6 v and beginning of vi; Smith 1997: 161). When the text resumes, Mot is complaining that Baal had fed Mot the latter's own brothers (*KTU* 1.6 vi 9–16; Smith 1997: 162). This points to part of what apparently occupied the preceding gap and leads to the last battle between the two (*KTU* 1.6 vi 16–22; Smith 1997: 162). They gore (*ngḥ*), bite (*nṭk*), and grapple (*mṣḥ*), and finally fall down simultaneously (*ql*).[12] Shapash calls a halt to the fighting, rebuking Mot (*KTU* 1.6 vi 22–35; Smith 1997: 163). She implicitly demands that he stop fighting with the threat that El will overturn his authority and rule.[13] Mot relents and declares that Baal should be enthroned (*KTU* 1.6 vi 33–35; Smith 1997: 163).

The next eight lines are largely incomplete (*KTU* 1.6 vi 35–42; Smith 1997: 163). After this, however, the tenor of the text changes and we have the conclusion of the six-tablet cycle (*KTU* 1.6 vi 42–53; Smith 1997: 163–164). The first lines of this section may be addressed to Mot, saying that he can consume offerings given to the dead (lines 42–45). But this is not clear. These first lines may be addressed to Shapash. The rest of the passage (lines 45–53) reads like a praise of Shapash, for it defines her authority. She shares the company of both the dead, including the royal and ancestral dead, and the gods, presumably of the upper world, and is supreme over both groups. This accords with her daily circuit through the upper world (day) and underworld (night), which may have been referred to in the previous broken lines (lines 35–42).

This final exaltation of Shapash may well be an addition to the text. The Baal and Mot narrative would have ended with Mot's concession to Baal's rule, thus describing the state of affairs in the world as they are presently, with life and death in tension with each other, each power accepting the other's existence.

The existential dimension

But, though Baal and Mot are equal in strength, Mot is made to concede victory to Baal (*KTU* 1.6 vi 22–35; Smith 1997: 163). Thus Baal, and hence Life, is given tacit precedence. Why does the text reflect this preference? The Akkadian Descent of Ishtar provides a parallel to this emphasis. Ishtar threatens to erase the separation between the two worlds (lines 16–20). By maintaining her position as queen of the netherworld, Ereshkigal preserves the world of the living and the world of the dead, and their distinctiveness. This fits with Ereshkigal's function as the one who models mourning for the dead (lines 34–36) and with the ending of the text, which emphasizes the proper function of the dead as those who rise in the proper season and mingle with the living (lines 136–138).

[12] The four bicola have a similar structure: the first line of each is a verb plus a preposition and noun of comparison (e.g., bicolon 3, lines 19–17: *ynghn / krumm* "they gore like water buffalo"), and the second line of each states the name of each contender, plus an adjective or verb of description. The second lines in the first three bicola are identical: *mt . ʿz . bʿl . ʿz* "Mot is enraged; Baal is enraged." The second line of the fourth bicolon differs: *mt . ql / bʿl . ql* "Mot fell; Baal fell." The second lines of the first three bicola emphasize the equal power of the two gods, and the second line of the last bicolon points to the fight being a virtual draw, which opens the door for Shapash to intervene.

[13] Shaphsh speaks to Athtar similarly (in *KTU* 1.2 iii [= Smith's column i] 15–18; Smith 1997: 96).

This theme also fits with the text's emphasis on the nature of death and the dead, over against the emphasis in the earlier Sumerian Descent of Inanna on the nature of the major gods of the netherworld.[14] Hence, the detailed description of the netherworld in lines 1–11 of the Akkadian text.[15] The Mesopotamian texts also provide another avenue for understanding the themes of the Baal and Mot narrative. The earlier Sumerian Descent of Inanna deals with fertility and sterility. In contrast, the later Akkadian Descent of Ishtar, while including these motifs, is more about death and life. (Note that we treat the description of the world in the Descent of Ishtar, lines 77–80 and 87–90, once Ishtar has died, as primarily a description of death and only secondarily as a description of the absence of fertility). The Baal and Mot narrative reflects both sets of motifs, but is more like the Descent of Ishtar. On the surface the Baal and Mot text deals with nature and fertility—e.g., Baal's death leads to infertility which is resolved at his restoration to power. But at a deeper level the text is dealing with life and death as indicated by the fact that although the two gods are equal in combat, Mot must give precedence to Baal and the principle of life.

Finally in this regard, the fertility–sterility and life–death themes in the Baal–Mot narrative might be thought of as different yet complementary figurative dimensions of the narrative. The death and revivification of Baal is a *metaphor* for (i.e., stands for or represents) famine and fertility (e.g., El's dream). At the level of human experience, death and revivification of Baal is a *metonym* (i.e., echoes or provides a pattern) for human death and life and the precedence of the latter over the former.[16]

Excursus: ritual in the Baal–Mot narrative

Ritual motifs contribute to the structuring of the Baal–Mot narrative, in a way that is similar to how they operate in the Aqhat and Kirta narratives.[17] The Baal–Mot narrative exhibits three categories of ritual: (1) feasting, (2) mourning and funerary, and (3) enthronement–dethronement. The first two categories operate sequentially and complementarily in the narrative, while the last is interspersed throughout the narrative. Each of these, like ritual activities in general, involves the articulation and construction of power relationships.

Feasting: This category appears at the beginning of the narrative (see the section in this essay on "Baal's Initial Conflict with Mot," above). It consists of two examples: the initial dedicatory feast after the completion of Baal's palace (*KTU* 1.4 vi 38–59; Smith 1997: 134–135) and the long series of negotiations regarding inviting Mot to a feast, which ends in Baal's death (*KTU* 1.4 viii 1–1.5 v 17; Smith 1997: 138–148). Mot's appetite, which fits a feasting theme, provides a climax to the latter feast and ultimately causes Baal's demise: Mot quite literally devours the deity (*KTU* 1.5 i 8–35, ii 2–6; Smith 1997: 141–143).

The feasting scenes contrast with each other in their ethos and purposes: the first feast is felicitous, whereas the second, because of the tensions operative in the negotiations and the final result, is infelicitous. The tensions of the second feast are set in narrative relief against the expectations of the first feast. As for their goal, feasts structure and are expressions of divine-royal power. The dedicatory feast undergirds Baal's might, while the feast with Mot leads to Baal's loss of power. Again, the first can be viewed as setting up expectations against which the second is perceived. In this context, infelicitous feasting receives more weight in the narrative's formulation and is the more engaging and interesting.

Feasting appears again, though obscurely, in the appendix to the narrative (*KTU* 1.6 vi 42–53; Smith 1997: 163–164; see the section this essay on "Baal's rejuvenation," above) where Mot or Shapash appears to be granted the consumption of offerings that are given to the dead (lines 42–45).

Mourning and funerary rites: After the second feast, with Mot and Baal's death, ritual performance shifts to mourning and funerary rituals (see the section in this essay on "Baal's death," above). Examples include: El's mourning (*KTU* 1.5 vi 11–25; Smith 1997: 149–150); Anat's mourning (*KTU* 1.5 vi 31–1.6 i 8; Smith 1997: 150–151); and Anat's burial and funerary offerings (*KTU* 1.6 i 8–31; Smith 1997: 151–152). Mourning ceases, and rejoicing can return when Anat finishes her burial rites (*KTU* 1.6 i 39–43; Smith 1997: 152–153).

These mourning and funerary rites all operate as inherently felicitous performances. Though responses to catastrophe, they are done without hitches or glitches. They portray the gods (El and Anat expressly) as operating according to accepted and expected custom and in sympathy with Baal.

Enthronement–dethronement: This theme runs through the narrative and is portrayed in different yet complementary ways. It is at the same time a structuring feature of the plot as well as a means of providing contrast

[14] For the Akkadian Descent of Ishtar, see Lapinkivi 2010: xi–33; for the Sumerian Descent of Inanna, see the translation by Jacobsen 1987: 205–232. We believe that Gugalanna was an early husband of Ereshkigal and that she was killed by Ishtar/Inanna; note, therefore, the ironic but plausible reason that Inanna gives (Sladek 1974: 114, lines 86–89; Jacobsen 1987: 210–211) for wishing to enter the netherworld ; cf. Abusch 1986: 161 = 2015: 29–30.

[15] See Abusch 1999: 310–311 = 2020: 89–90.

[16] See also the discussion at Smith and Pitard 2009: 683–684.

[17] For ritual in Ugaritic narrative see Wright 2001; for feasting in the Baal Cycle, see Belnap 2008: 49–124.

between characters and events. Examples involve different characters and are interwoven in the narrative: Baal, El, and Athtar. References follow with some textual detail to show how the motif is articulated.

Baal: In the first half of the narrative when Baal's palace is finished and celebrated, Baal is found enthroned (*KTU* 1.4 vii 42; Smith 1997: 137; *yṯb . bʿl . lbhth* "Baal sits in his palace"; see part A of this essay). He thus can manifest his power, which includes sending an announcement to Mot (*KTU* 1.4 vii 33–56; Smith 1997: 137–138). Baal's dethronement is characterized by his *descending* into Mot's maw (e.g., *KTU* 1.5 ii 2–6; Smith 1997: 143; note *bph yrd*... "into his mouth he will descend ...").

When he is restored, Baal is again found on his throne (*KTU* 1.6 v 1–8; Smith 1997: 160). Presumably his retaking of the throne is described in a broken part of the text (see the section of this essay on "Baal's rejuvenation", above). When Mot and Baal finally cease their strife, Mot says that Baal should be (remain?) enthroned (*bʿl . yṯṯbn*[. *lksi*] *mlkh* "let Baal be set on his royal throne"; *KTU* 1.6 vi 33–35; Smith 1997: 163).

El: The high god engages in behavior that imitates and reacts to Baal's vicissitudes. Already on his throne, when he hears of Baal's death, he descends and engages in mortifying mourning rites (*KTU* 1.5 vi 11–25; Smith 1997: 149–150). He takes his throne again when he learns that Baal is alive (*KTU* 1.6 iii 10–21; Smith 1997: 157–158).[18]

Athtar: In between El's descent and reascent, Athtar undergoes enthronement and dethronement (*KTU* 1.6 i 56–63; Smith 1997: 154). He ascends (*yʿl*) Ṣapan and sits (*yṯb*) on Baal's throne, but cannot fill it, and so descends (*yrd*; *KTU* 1.6 i 56–64; Smith 1997: 154). The climax of this scene is a negative ritual declaration of abdication: "I cannot be king on Ṣapan's height" (*l amlk . bṣrrt. ṣpn*; line 62).

The various ascents and descents articulate the tensions in power dynamics. In terms of ritual ethos, enthronement is inherently felicitous; dethronement is inherently infelicitous, precipitated by violence and catastrophe or, in the case of Athtar, embarrassment.

[18] It can be noted that Anat's mourning, which parallels El's, does not include her descending or later reascending to a throne. But the passage does include cases of descent and ascent. Shapash descends to her (*trd...špš*; p. 151, 1.6 i 8) and Anat brings Baal up to Ṣapan (*tšʿlynh bṣrrt . ṣp<ʿ>n*; *KTU* 1.6 i 15; Smith 1997: 152). Perhaps the latter is related emblematically to the enthronement theme.

Abbreviation

KTU (*KTU*[3]): Dietrich, Loretz and Sanmartín 2013.

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Chapter 28:
A confidential message:
Divine combat and death in a forgotten Akkadian seal from Ur

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Abstract. A forgotten seal documents the only representation of a dead god in the arms of the god who killed him. This violent representation can be read on various levels. At the simplest level, it is a divine battle that finds echoes in Mesopotamian cosmogony. At a more complex level, it is about the advent of a new age that coincides with the death of the god and the subjugation of men and is guaranteed by Šamaš. That the seal also alludes to the birth of a new political epoch desired by the Akkadian dynasty seems a triviality. But the seal also has a clear apotropaic value, which results from the choice of the natural colours of the stone for the different subjects: for the dead god, the seal cutter used the black vein of the stone, for the other subjects he used the white vein.

Keywords: Divine death, divine combat, Akkadian, seals, Ur, bird-god, Šamaš, apotropaic, creation myths, orality.

When Nietzsche said "Gott ist tod," he did not know that the ancient Mesopotamians had already represented this death. Clearly, the death of a god is unthinkable from a metaphysical and ontological point of view. It is a subversive and contradictory construction in myths, and even more so in images. The representation of a god wearing a horned crown dead in the arms of the god who killed him is unbelievably violent, and as far as I know, it is unique, giving rise to two questions: How did the idea for such a representation come about? And for whom was this seal made?

I am honoured to pay tribute to Tallay with an article devoted to gods, a central topic in her research. Tallay's writings are a source of inspiration for a more profound understanding of the figurative culture of Western Asia. Specifically, I find her emphasis on the richness of glyptics, the only figurative art attested down the millennia that illuminates the mythical-poetic imagery of the Mesopotamians, to be extraordinarily insightful. I hope that the originality of the unusual seal discussed here will stir her interest.

Prior interpretations

The seal (Figure 1) was found during the fifth season of excavations (1926–1927) in the royal cemetery of Ur, in grave PG 514.[1] This tomb is one of those that were completely overlooked by the final excavation reports. The occupant of the grave is unknown, as is the presence of other objects, and even the shape of the grave. Indeed, after excavating more than 2,100 tombs, Woolley describes only 73,[2] i.e. 3.5%. For the Akkadian period, he describes only six tombs, not including PG 514. The absence is significant in the sense that it suggests that there was nothing special about this tomb, at least from Woolley's point of view. The seal was, however, analysed and published in the preliminary reports (Legrain 1929) and then in the final excavation reports (Legrain 1934).

Legrain did not say in which museum the seal had ended up, which usually means that the object was sent to Baghdad, in accordance with the division of property in force at the time. Luckily, on the Ur-online website, I found its actual location: the Penn Museum, with inventory number B16876.

It is a slightly concave seal, black and white with a little green vein, on which there are seven characters with no background, three men and four gods. Described as black and white marble in the archaeological reports, I would suggest it is black and white diorite. According to Collon (1987: 32), after serpentine, rock crystal and jasper, this is one of the most widely used stones of the Akkadian period, but the colour is a question to which I will return.

Legrain interpreted the seal as representing the triumph of the solar heroes (note the plural). Quoting Legrain directly (Legrain 1934: 364), the winged character is: "a bird-man of darkness and storm who oppresses

[1] The excavation number is U.9026 and the museum number is B 16876. Green and white marble cylinder seal with concave face. 32 × 21 mm (32 × 20 mm, according to the Ur online site http://www.ur-online.org/subject/8688/). Legrain 1929: 258–306; Legrain 1934: 541 and 364.

[2] 43 private graves and 15 royal graves of the first dynasty, 9 of the second Dynasty and 6 of the Akkadian period.

Figure 1. Seal B 16876 (courtesy of the Penn Museum, image B16876).

Figure 2. Seal published the first time (Legrain 1934: pl. 216, no. 394).

humanity. He tramples on a prostrate man, and presses down the heads of two others kneeling and crying for mercy. He is Zu, the robber." The two other standing characters are both Šamaš : one has "flaming wings and the golden saw shines through the clouds. He wears the pleated kilt of Kish style,[3] which opens in front," and the other is "his nude athletic servant who breaks the back of the hero of darkness. He surges with both arms and flaming wings above the dropping broken body. All the solar heroes have the same mitre. Only the enemy has the central plume."

The versions of the Penn Museum and the Ur website do not differ greatly. Both identify two Šamaš, one standing with wings and sword and one nude.[4] However, both leave out Legrain's less reliable judgements, including the clouds, the Kish-style clothes and the darkness of the "bird-man." The Ur website prefers to leave out the bird-god altogether and concentrates on the figures of the clothed Šamaš and the naked Šamaš carrying the dead god. This simplification of Legrain's description makes the seal more credible, but by not addressing what is troublesome, one cannot fully understand the meaning of the iconography, especially the presence of two Šamaš.

Analysis

The scene is in fact more complex than Legrain describes. First of all, the impression published in UE II (Legrain 1934) was produced wrongly (cf. Figure 2).[5] The

[3] His pleated kilt opens in front (Legrain 1934: 364), i.e. he wears the Kish-style pleated kilt (Legrain 1929: 289, pl.34).

[4] <https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/37523>; http://www.ur-online.org/subject/8688/.

[5] I performed the restitution by cutting out part of the image published in 1934 and pasting it back into the right position. After that, I luckily found one of the photos published on the Penn Museum

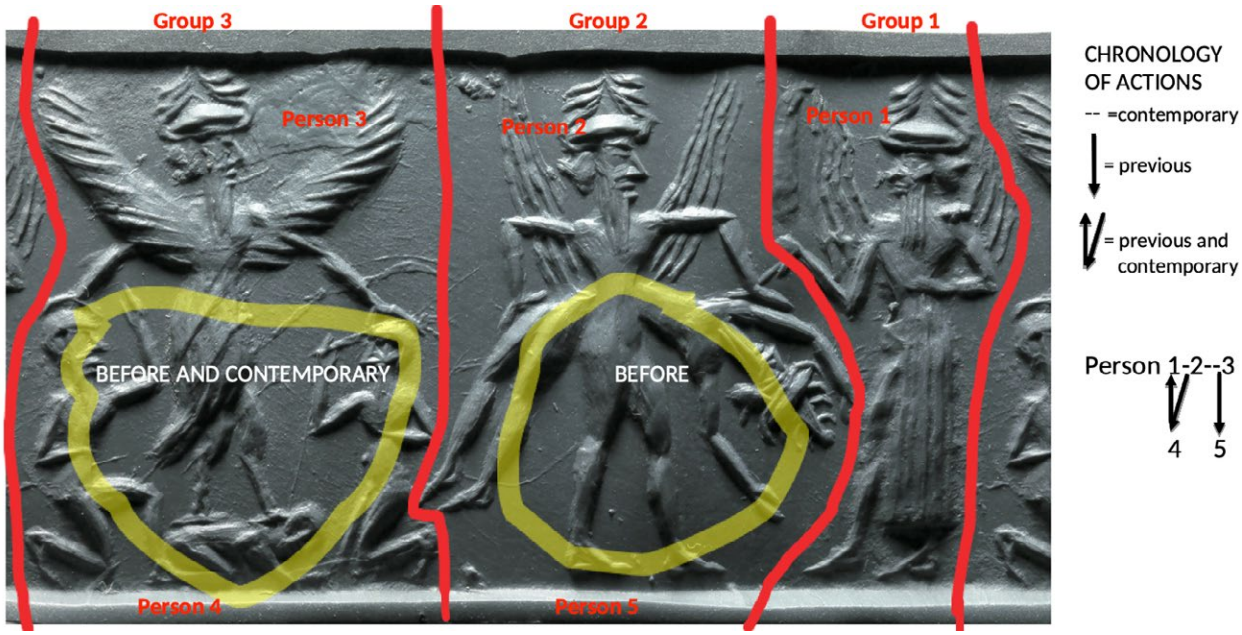

Figure 3. Composition of the seal B 16876 (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

bird-god is looking at the clothed god and thus cannot be behind him. Secondly, the seal is made up of three groups (Figure 3): the clothed god on the right, the bird-god subjugating three mortals on the left and the dead god in the arms of his killer in the middle. Lastly, not only the style but also the organisation of the scene are well thought out, which means that sketches were performed before the incision on the stone.

Chronological order of the scenes represented

The clothed god is the main god: he has the attitude of the god receiving worshippers in introduction scenes; he faces the other characters and raises his right hand in welcome. Of the other characters, two, both gods, are facing the clothed god and looking at him; the other four characters are not looking in the direction of the main god. One of these, a god, is dead; the other three are not divine and are looking at the bird-god who is oppressing them. Chronologically, the scene of the bird-god oppressing the three humans is prior to the tribute of the bird-god to the main god. In the same way, the killing of the god who is represented in the arms of his killer is prior to the homage to the main god (Table 1). The narrative level is abbreviated and condensed: some actions precede the homage (the subjugation of mortals; the killing of the god), others are contemporaneous with the homage (the corpse carried in triumph).

Table 1. Acts represented on the seal and their temporal order

Groups	Bird-god and mortals	God killer and slain god	Main god
Number of characters	Four in total	Two in total	One in total, receiving the tribute of two victorious gods
Actions	Past + present	Past + present	Present

Hierarchical order of the scenes

Lastly, the way in which the figures are constructed immediately shows who the victorious and losers characters are, as well as which actions are previous and which are contemporary. It is not only the size of the characters that shows their importance (the dead god is the same size as the main characters, while the humans are represented in a smaller size), but also the construction of the figures. The main characters (Figure 4) are constructed with lines and geometric patterns, which extend from the base of the seal to the top. The three main characters are thus the two gods paying homage and the god receiving it.

The other four characters are losers: they are represented as smaller (with the exception of the dead god, precisely because he is a god) and in subordinate poses (trampled, pushed downwards, hands raised in fear, carried in triumph).[6] They are constructed in

website identical with my restitution (although the other photos follow the wrong image published by Legrain 1929 and 1934).

[6] Although the dead god is the same size as the three standing figures, since he shares their divine nature, his inferiority or difference is visually marked by the particular type of horned tiara.

Figure 4. Construction of the winners along ascending lines (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

Figure 5. Construction of the losers along descending lines (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

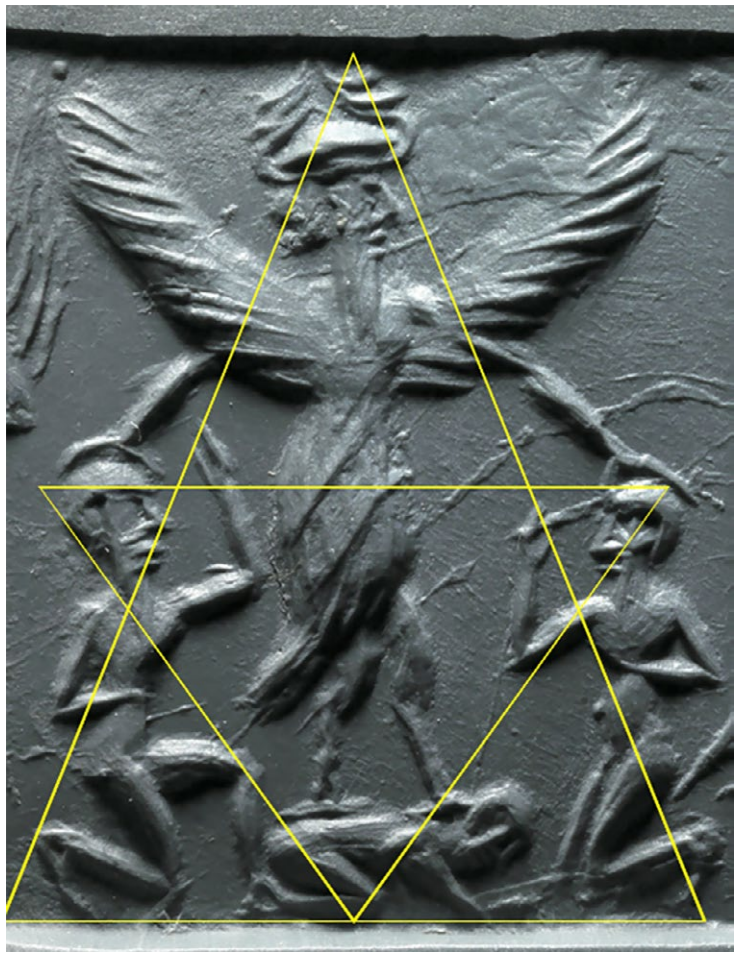

Figure 6. Construction of the third group of the seal B 16876 according to triangles (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

Figure 7. Ascending and descending lines of characters of the seal B 16876 (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

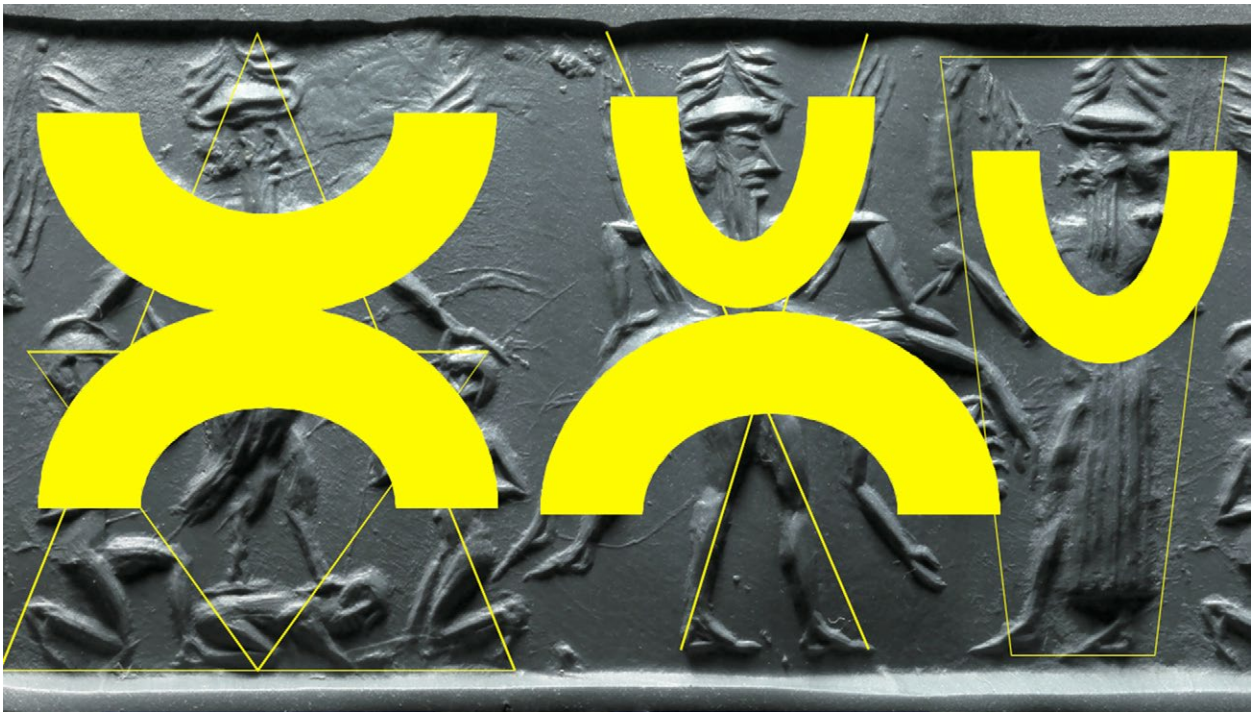

Figure 8. All the geometric lines and shapes of the characters of the seal B 16876 (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

accordance with geometric shapes (Figure 5) that start from the bottom but do not extend beyond the middle of the seal. Geometrically pointing downwards, the figures of the three mortals represent an inverted image of the geometric figure of the gods: the triangle of the three men is inverted with respect to the triangle that serves to form the bird-god (Figure 6), a clear metaphor. The dead god forms a downward-pointing arc (note that it is in the centre of the scene), like the arc of the two vanquished men flanking the bird-god. These two arcs are exactly the opposite of the three upward-pointing arcs that characterise the three living gods (Figure 7). Now, if there were just one or two geometric figures in this seal, one might think it was a coincidence, but each character here has been cleverly calculated. These geometric lines and shapes are not random: they are carefully composed in order to construct the scene (Figure 8), subordinate it to hierarchical considerations and make it more dramatic. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the dead god is in the centre and forms an arc that is inverted not only in relation to the god holding him but to all the other gods in the scene.

Lastly, there are lines that unite all the characters without interruption (Figure 9): the clothed and isolated god touches the bird-god behind him with his luminous rays and the naked god with his hand. With his right hand, the dead god touches the right knee of the clothed god and with his right foot the bottom of one of the three vanquished mortals, who touch each other and are touched by the bird-god who is linked to the clothed and isolated god behind him. These continuous lines create four small empty spaces (Figure 10), but they indicate above all the unified reading of the scene and the unity of meaning of the actions, underlined by the almost identical attitude of the two gods paying homage to the other god. Indeed, the position of the arms, open and sloping sightly downwards (to hold the dead man or to push down the heads of the mortals) is the same. In both cases, the vanquished form a downward-pointing arc, and this is an aspect to which I will return. First however, we must deal with the thorny problem of identification.

Identification of the characters

The identification of the characters represented in seal B16876 is no easy task.

Winners and main gods

The robed god receiving the tribute is the easiest to identify. Indeed, the seal-cutters placed the saw-toothed knife in his hand, which the bearer holds high even when seated. This object, often identified with the *šaššaru* cited in the texts, is poorly understood. It could be a sort of key to open the gates of heaven used by the morning sun (Fiandra and Feroli 1993) or a serrated knife (a saw-toothed knife, according to Collon 1987:

Figure 9. Lines that unite all the characters without interruption (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

Figure 10. Continuous line and four small empty spaces (© L. Battini, after the image B16876_02, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

Figure 11. Comparisons of the rays (top left: seal B 16876, courtesy of the Penn Museum, image B16876_02; top right: Louvre A 141; bottom left: A 681; bottom right: BM 89810)

35), rather than a saw (CAD Š 2: 174a–175a). In any case, the *šaššaru* is the emblem of Šamaš.

The other characters are more difficult to identify. The naked god carrying the dead god cannot be identified with Šamaš purely on the basis of the rays behind his shoulders, first of all because the sun-god does not always have these rays, and even a simple man can be represented with "rays " behind his shoulders and even his legs (Louvre A 141) (Figure 11).[7] Moreover, the presence of two Šamaš figures is impossible here, since it would not make sense for the god to pay homage to himself.

Legrain (1934: 541) realised the contradiction of having two Šamaš figures and solved the problem by identifying one with Šamaš and one with "a nude athletic servant" of Šamaš. This is consistent with the naked god paying homage to Šamaš, but it is unnecessary. In any case, the naked god is clearly a warrior: in Akkadian seals with representations of divine battles, the gods mostly fight naked. In addition, by carrying the dead god's corpse in his arms, the naked god shows that he is responsible for killing him.

The bird-god is not so easy to identify: several Akkadian seals show a bird and human character being brought before the main deity sometimes as a captive sometimes as a worshipper. Sometimes he wears the horned diadem, but more often he does not. Usually, this character is identified with Anzu, but Anzu is a bird, not a mixed creature, and there are about ten Akkadian seals that depict a divine battle against a large bird. Here he is not a bird, but a god with both avian and human elements. Lastly, as in the myth, Anzu is presented as a negative power, whom Ninurta kills because he has stolen the table of destinies. Here however, the bird god is shown in a positive context, because he pays homage to the god of justice, Šamaš. Thus, neither the representation (as a hybrid creature) nor the positive context support identification with Anzu, and I will continue to call him a bird-god.

Losers

The other four characters, who are hierarchically represented as subordinate to the three living gods, are a dead god and three men. The latter are about half the size of the gods, and they appear to be naked, because they are vanquished. One is trampled by the bird-god, while the other two have perhaps been seized by the hair rather than being thrust downwards. These

[7] This means that in other Akkadian seals, identification with Šamaš on the basis of luminous rays behind the shoulders cannot always be accepted. A new interpretation of such rays is therefore necessary, and they ought to be discussed on a case-by-case basis. They could be the *melammu,* i.e. divine splendour, but why in some seals, for example, the one conserved in the Louvre, this feature has been attributed to a man remains to be clarified. Alternatively, the rays are a sign of recognition or approval on the part of the god of justice.

Figure 12. Comparisons of trampling enemies (top centre: Iran, Darban i-Belula; top right: Anubanini relief; bottom left: Rimuš Stele; bottom centre: Iran, Darband-i-Gawr; bottom right: Naram-Sin stele).

representations have parallels with contemporary Akkadian works and others from the late 3rd/early 2nd millennia that were inspired by Akkadian works (Figure 12), thus suggesting the existence of Akkadian sculptures, now lost, with a broader panel of themes. The theme of trampling, for example, is widely used in Early Dynastic representations of warfare, in both the Akkadian Period and in the rock art of the late 3rd and early 2nd millennia BC (Battini 2018: 95–130).

On the other hand, the theme of the dead god carried by another god is unique in Mesopotamian art. I have not found it elsewhere in the Akkadian or more generally Mesopotamian iconographic documentation. There is another depiction of a god who is dying (Louvre AO 4709) but still alive, with his arms raised. Moreover, the representation is not as dramatic as that of seal B16876, because the dying god is almost hidden and clearly not central to the organisation of the scene.

Significance of the seal

This seal is part of a large group of Akkadian seals that represent divine battles, more or less violently and dramatically.[8] There are about seventy of these fight scenes (Battini 2023), all of them from the Akkadian period.[9] Twenty represent exclusively divine combat, while the other fifty have an additional motif. Among the latter group is seal B16876, which indeed incorporates two divine combat scenes and a presentation scene. Since there are no other characters on the seal, the presentation scene is not only subsequent to the divine battles but also related to them: the bird-god and the naked god may be offering their victories to the main god, Šamaš, or they may be thanking Šamaš for the victories. Divine combat here is thus subordinate to

[8] Bibliography includes both iconography and texts: Frankfort 1934; van Buren 1950; Boehmer 1965: 53–55, 88–94; Porada 1980; Felli 2006; Trimm 2017: 553–625; Battini 2023.

[9] This theme was probably considered too dramatic and was quickly dropped. However, it was reused at least once in the Neo-Assyrian period (Battini 2023), which saw a revival of Akkadian motifs designed to justify royal power.

Figure 13. Choice of the stone's colours for the characters (© L. Battini, [from left to right] after images B16876_bt03, B16876_bt04 and B16876_bt01, courtesy of the Penn Museum).

the homage to Šamaš. One could stop at this initial level of interpretation: we have homage to the god of justice, who guarantees the justness of the divine battles (and human battles too). However, the way the seal is constructed, the carefully crafted style and the presence of a unique representation in the centre of the scene suggest that other meanings are possible. To understand them, one must take account of all the groups depicted and also bear in mind that the scene has the image of the dead god in the centre. Can the elements of the scene be identified with a cosmogonic origin myth (Frankfort 1934; van Buren 1950)? Or do they merely allude to the annual cycles of nature (Amiet 1976 and 1977)? Or does seal B16876 represent an example of a myth that was not handed down to us by the written tradition but can be deduced from glyptic art?[10]

The dead god and the god carrying him

Scenes of divine combat are present on other seals and seem to allude to mythical creation battles (Battini 2023). About 70 cylinder seals dated to the period from Sargon to Šar-kali-šarri show gods fighting. The contests can be duels or involve multiple combatants; they can be the sole subject or they can accompany another subject. The gods are recognisable by their horned tiara and are naked because they are represented at the beginning of creation (van Buren 1950), even when a link to a specific myth cannot be established. The representation of the dead god on seal B16876 is unique. That said, Mesopotamian myths attest to various possibilities concerning the death of a god,[11] which may represent a founding act of humanity,[12] a rearrangement of the pantheon[13] and the regeneration of vegetation.[14]

The bird-god and the three men

The battle of the bird-god is not with other gods but with mortal men. The recorded myths mention the punishment of humanity, responsible for overpopulation, by famines, floods, droughts, and the fact that the god in our case is represented as partly nature is perhaps an allusion to such natural events.

[10] It is to Tallay Ornan's (2005) credit that she suggested looking for traces of lost myths, oral as well as written, in the rich iconography of the seals. In recent years, the orality of ancient societies has been lost from view as a result of the trend among historians seeking to prove that writing was much more widespread than hitherto believed. However, even largely illiterate societies cannot live without their myths.

[11] See Xella (ed.) 2001. There are indeed various myths related to the death of a god, as pointed out by specialists in religions. The problem is that they are not all linked to the cycle of regeneration of nature as Frazer proposed (1890). The dying god can be conceived as an archetype of religious sacrifice (as in Dogon myths from before the advent of man), as representing a messianic possibility of change and future salvation (as in Christian religions and the Rwandan myth of Ryangombe who, punished for his disobedience by death, was allowed –before dying– to designate his son as his successor and at the same time to institute the Mandwa initiatory cult), as the foundation of divine justice (as in the Nigerian myth of Shango, who died as Shango the man but was reborn as Orisha the god) and as the founding act of humanity, which thereby acquires a divine origin (as in the Amazonian myth of Ondiamuçabe). Frazer did however recognise other meanings of dying gods in myths originating beyond the Mediterranean basin and Western Asia, for example among the Aztecs, where the killing of prisoners dressed as gods served to rejuvenate the deities. In short, such a subversive concept as the death of a god, a theme that is present (though not extensively developed) in the religious thought of various peoples, cannot be understood in the sense of one meaning alone.

[12] In the Enuma Elish Kingu is sacrificed to facilitate the creation of man with his blood. For the creation myths see Bottéro and Kramer 1989; Foster 2005: 436–486; Sasson 2008; Lambert 2013; Scurloch 2013; Masetti-Rouault 2019.

[13] As in the struggle between Tiamat and the new generation of gods.

[14] Consider Dumuzi and Inanna.

It is not clear however why this scene is represented together with combat between gods. Did the mortals rebel at the moment of the gods' struggle?

Conclusions

The figurative culture of Mesopotamia and more generally Western Asia is so dense because there are so many possible levels of interpretation. The easiest level is one that today's scholars generally understand quite well. Other levels of reading are more difficult, but potentially more rewarding in terms of research.

Seal B16876 can be read simply as a depiction of divine combat that seems to justify the Akkadian kings' wars. On a deeper level however, the seal represents the triumph, celebrated before Šamaš, over both men and gods. The scene's empty background[15] places it outside real time and space. One could suggest a mythical episode taken from one of the creation stories, but in my opinion, it is an original reworking of mythical heritage in accordance with the tastes of the period. The association of the bird-god and the warrior-god is new. The destruction of humanity and the divine combat which ends with the death of a god clearly indicate a new world, which is righteous because it is placed under the protection of Šamaš. Between the lines, this serves to celebrate the new order established by the Akkadian kings. Destruction means regeneration: the end justifies the means. The representation of a dead god is indeed unique, but it signals regeneration, heralding a new cosmic era. That this era is righteous is shown by the colours of the stone (Figure 13): the seal cutter carefully chose the black part of the stone to represent the dead god and the white parts for the god Šamaš and the bird-god. The seal thus also has an apotropaic value.

To whom and for whom was this seal made? It has been noted by various scholars that "there is no obvious correspondence between the scene depicted on a seal and a particular profession." However, it is also clear that the choice of iconography[16] is not random but probably has some relation to the socio-economic and cultural role of the seal's owner. A seal such as the one presented here, so rich in mythological allusions, bold in its representation of a dead god, original in the juxtaposition of a warrior-god and a bird-god, skilful in the construction of the scene by means of lines and geometric shapes and characterised by great finesse of execution, was no common artefact. It probably belonged to an important official, perhaps a priest linked to Šamaš and Ur and sufficiently cultivated to possess the only known representation of a divine death. He wore it because he understood not just its apotropaic value but the new world arising from the deaths depicted on it. The uniqueness of the seal explains why the seal was deposited in the tomb of the person who possessed it. And this is another proof that the owner of the seal was important, since he was buried in the high society cemetery.

[15] This allows for a greater focus on the characters.

[16] See Winter 1987: 80–82; and Ornan 2005: *passim.*

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Chapter 29:
Three Kassite seals in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem

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Abstract. This article is a publication of three cylinder seals from the Kassite period in the collection of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, containing prayer and incantation formulas. The use of these formulas, intended to secure the gods' favor for the seal owners, and the inscriptions' physical prominence on the seals, where they occupy a space larger than the visual scenes, can be understood as part of a general shift from official to personal religion in Kassite Babylonia.

Keywords: cylinder seals, Kassite period, prayer, incantation, personal religion

Introduction

In her decades-long career, Prof. Tallay Ornan has made numerous important contributions to the study of ancient Near Eastern glyptic. It is a pleasure to dedicate to her a publication of three cylinder seals in the collection of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, of which two have not been previously published and one was published in several incomplete stages, which led to a partly mistaken presentation of its content. The seals date to the Kassite period, and contain prayer formulas and an incantation – genres most recently discussed by Oshima (2011: 20–27), Yalçın (2016: 133–134) and Zomer (2018: 23–24, 27, 46, 57–58). Two of the seal inscriptions are in Sumerian and provide an addition to the recently launched ORACC project "Corpus of Kassite Sumerian Texts" (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ckst/).[1]

BLMJ 2705

The seal is made of smoky yellow-white agate and measures 3.3 × 1.5 cm (Figures 1 and 2). It features a seated divine figure in a blessing gesture; before it, the Kassite cross and two antelope heads are shown. The scene is crudely executed, but has a parallel in a seal now in the British Museum (BM 89128), dated to the reign of Kurigalzu I, early 14th century BCE (Matthews 1990: no. 34; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996: 198, pl. XVII, photo pl. 6, no. 168). Another parallel can be found in a seal in the Gorelick collection, no. 31 (Matthews 1990: no. 42). Neither of these seals features antelope heads beneath the Kassite cross, but such heads are a well-attested element in Kassite seals (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996: pl. 5, C, a, 1). The cross, used in the glyptic art of ancient Iran since pre-historic times, was probably a solar symbol at its origin, but by the time of its adoption in Kassite Babylonia it seems to have become a symbol of Marduk, the chief god of Babylon (Ehrenberg 2002).

The seal's cuneiform legend is inscribed in vertical columns occupying the whole height of the field. This classifies the seal as belonging to the First Kassite style, which spans the period of ca. 1450–1250 BCE (Matthews 1990: 55–60). The legend reads:

1. ^{d}nin-ìmma umun gal
2. dingir šà-lá-sù
3. giš-tuku sùd-⌜bi⌝
4. nì-ba ti-⌜la⌝
5. [ì]r ní-tuku-[zu]
6. arḫuš tuku-na-ab

> "O Ninimma, great lady,[2] merciful deity, who hears prayer and gives life, have mercy on [your] reverent [ser]vant!"

Prayer to a deity to have mercy on the seal owner is a common motif in seal inscriptions of the Kassite period (Limet 1971: 48, 67–77, 83, 111, 116; Matthews 1992: 20, 69, 72–73, 89, 91–93, 97–102, 117, 119, 126). Interestingly, the Sumerian prayer on this seal is addressed to the goddess Ninimma, venerated at Nippur as a daughter of Enlil and a goddess associated with writing, childbirth and healing (Asher-Greve and Goodnick Westenholz 2013: 96 no. 401, 101–102, 144 no. 580). Ninimma is only rarely mentioned in Kassite period seals (Limet 1971: 60, no. 2.14; Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996: 177, no. 20).

The seated god depicted on the seal is undoubtedly male, and his very appearance is somewhat exceptional, since it has been noted that "Kassite glyptics reveals a

[1] The project includes a section on seal inscriptions, which, according to the most recent information on its web page, dated December 27, 2019, is "forthcoming" <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ckst/introduction/sealinscriptions/index.html>.

[2] Sumerian umun normally corresponds to Akkadian *bēlu* "lord," but occasionally also to *bēltu* "lady" (see *CAD* B: 188a, s.v. *bēltu*, lexical section).

Figure 1. The seal BLMJ 2705 (© photo: Hamutal Gabayev)

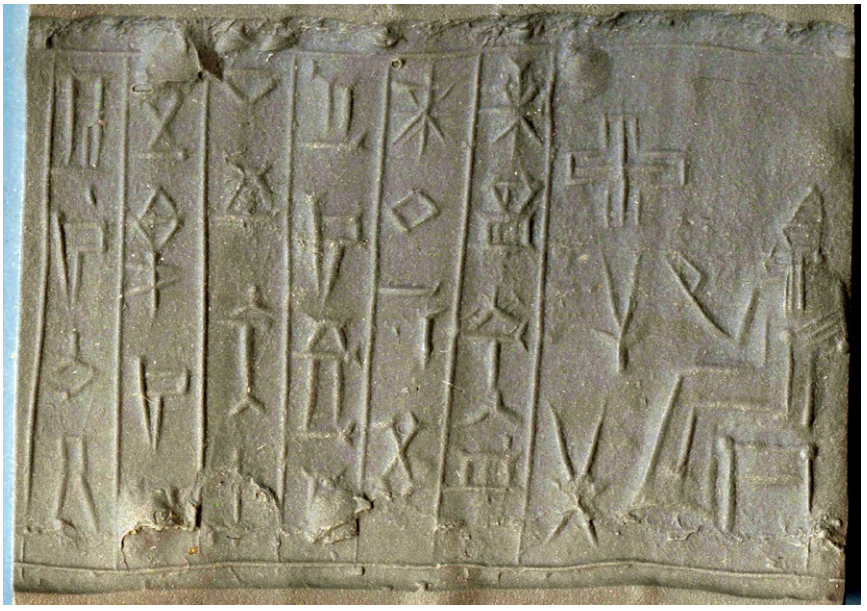

Figure 2. Modern Impression of the seal BLMJ 2705 (© photo: Sue Vukosavović)

certain avoidance from representing human shaped deities" (Ornan 2005: 50). The deviation from the general tendency suggests a special reason, which in this instance was probably apotropaic. Perhaps the god's blessing gesture was intended to reinforce the inscribed prayer, addressed to a different (female) deity.

BLMJ 2706

The seal is made of banded brown-white agate, and measures 2.1 × 0.9 cm (Figures 3 and 4). Its scene features a standing worshiper. The figure is crudely executed, but the position of the arms – the right arm raised in a praying gesture, the left folded on the chest – is Donald Matthews' type 3, which features frequently in the First Kassite style (Matthews 1990: 20, and pl. I). The round cap worn by the worshiper is also characteristic of the First Kassite style (Matthews 1990: 83).

The seal's cuneiform legend is, again, inscribed in vertical columns spanning the entire field, which is a prime characteristic of the First Kassite style. It reads:

1. *re-me-ni*
2. ^{d}*Šamaš*(UTU)
3. *za-qí-ip*
4. *za-ki-ir*
5. *kur-ba-šu*

"Have mercy on me, Šamaš, who lifts up (a person)! (Whenever the god) is invoked, bless him!"

A very similar Akkadian legend, but with a mention of Marduk instead of Šamaš and without the participle *zāqip* "he who lifts up," is cited by Limet (1971: 78–79, no. 5.6 – Morgan collection 573). Limet understood the

Figure 3. The seal BLMJ 2706 (© photo: Hamutal Gabayev)

Figure 4. Modern Impression of the seal BLMJ 2706 (© photo: Sue Vukosavović)

signs ^{d}AMAR.UTU-*za-ki-ir* as forming a single personal name, Marduk-zākir. However, another seal legend cited by Limet starts with the invocation: *re-me-na-at* ^{d}*Gu-la mu-bal-lí-ṭa-at kur-ba-a-ši* "Merciful is Gula, the one who keeps alive; bless her!" (Limet 1971: 79, no. 5.7 – Bibliothèque Nationale 303). This parallel suggests that the word following the divine name is a self-standing epithet of the deity, rather than part of the seal owner's personal name. Such an interpretation also fits better the structure of the inscription on the present seal, where *zāqip* is an epithet of Šamaš, and the following phrase is an independent sentence: *zakir kurbāšu* "(Whenever the god) is invoked, bless him!"

The imperative *kurbāšu* appears in plural, which means that its grammatical subject must be distinct from that of the singular form *zakir*. Consequently, *zakir* is best understood as a stative which forms a non-subordinated temporal or circumstantial clause. The notion of blessing a god whenever he is invoked resembles the biblical statement in the law of the altar that follows the Ten Commandments: "In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you" (Exodus 20:21). However, in the Hebrew Bible the perspective is reversed: it is God who blesses his worshipers, and not the other way around.

Figure 5. The seal BLMJ 2844 (© photo: Hamutal Gabayev)

Figure 6. Modern Impression of the seal BLMJ 2844 (© photo: Sue Vukosavović)

BLMJ 2844

The seal is made of black glass or obsidian, and as preserved, measures 3.3 × 1.5 cm (Figures 5 and 6). About 30% of the seal are missing at the bottom, hence its original height can be estimated at ca. 4.7 cm. It represents an *apkallu* priest in a fish garb, holding in his left hand a ritual bucket[3] (*banduddû*) and extending his right hand – indicated much more clearly, from the shoulder to the fingers – in a worshiping gesture.[4] The priest stands before a god who wears a horned crown. Since the seal legend is a magical incantation formula, it appears that the *apkallu* priest depicted in the scene is the expert who would be charged with performing the incantation (Zomer 2018: 72). Given the general apotropaic significance of the *apkallu* figure, his depiction on the seal may have been intended to reinforce the incantation's efficacy.[5] At the top of the scene, a cross and two rhomb symbols appear. The rhomb apparently corresponds to a vulva or a grain of corn, and may be associated with the goddess Zarpānītu, Marduk's consort, thus suggesting that the cross is indeed a symbol of Marduk (Ehrenberg 2002:

[3] For the bucket, see in this volume the chapter by Norma Franklin, pp. 49–60.

[4] In Neo-Assyrian art, the *apkallu* priests are commonly depicted holding a ritual bucket and a purification cone (*mullilu*) – either a male inflorescence of a date-palm or a cone of a coniferous tree (Wiggermann 1992: 66–67). However, in Kassite seals which prefigure the Neo-Assyrian depictions of the *apkallu*, the bucket and the cone were mostly not depicted, and if any of these objects was shown, it was more often the bucket (Matthews 1990: 107–108).

[5] For the fish-*apkallu* as protective beings, and the priests representing them, see Wiggermann (1992: 76–79), and the earlier literature cited there.

68–69). It is not clear why the rhomb symbol is depicted twice on the seal, while the cross is shown only once.

Gisela Stiehler-Alegria Delgado published this seal as LBAF 428, with a reference to the catalog of the exhibition *Ladders to Heaven*, which was organized in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto by the Lands of the Bible Archaeology Foundation (LBAF), established by Dr. Elie Borowski, in 1979 (Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1996: 214, pl. XXIX, no. 266). The same designation of the seal, LBAF 428, is adopted by Matthews, who classified it as belonging to the First Kassite style (Matthews 1990: 86, no. 144). However, the seal does not appear in the published catalog of the exhibition *Ladders to Heaven* (Muscarella 1981). It was published in the catalog of the exhibition *Dragons, Monsters and Fabulous Beasts* which took place at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem in 2004 (Goodnick Westenholz 2004: 58, no. 12), but only with a partial translation and no transliteration of its cuneiform legend.

Another track in the publication history of this seal began with its inclusion in the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Irving Finkel, as a specimen of the *Ḫulbazizi* incantations intended to protect a person from evil (Finkel 1976: pl. 59; and cf. ibid., 110–113, ll. 189 and 210). Finkel's transliteration of the seal's cuneiform legend is cited, without translation, by Stiehler-Alegria Delgado (1996: 214, no. 266). His drawing of the seal impression also served as the basis for the recent edition of its legend by Zomer (2018: 244–245, no. 7.1). Yet, Zomer mistakenly assumed that the formula tu_6.an.é.nu.ru "incantation" is repeated both at the beginning and the end of the legend. In fact, it appears only at the end of the text which follows the scene – although, of course, when the seal is continuously rolled on a flat surface, the last line of the legend will appear immediately above the scene.

The following transliteration follows Zomer, with the correction of the abovementioned mistake:

1. zi-zi-da nu-⌜e⌝-[da-aš]
2. sag-giš lú-ab-[da-aš]
3. zi ḫa-ra zi nu ḫ[a-ra]
4. zi ^{d}nin.urta [ḫa-ra]
5. tu_6 an-é-nu-[ru]

(1-2) "Be off! Do not [. . .!] . . . (3-4) May he conjure you! By a statue(?) ma[y he conjure you!] By Ninurta [may he conjure you!]. (5) Incantation."

As Zomer observed (2018: 244), lines 1–2 of the seal contain a formula which in the later, canonical *Ḫulbazizi*-series would become incantation no. 38, and lines 3–4 contain a formula which would become incantation 33.[6] The text in line 2 defies translation, although it recurs, with some variants, on several seals and amulets of the Kassite period. The general sense is suggested by the parallel Akkadian text in the canonical *Ḫulbazizi*-series: *nansiḫ ina šiknat napištim* "(May the evildoer) be removed from the realm of life!" (Finkel 1976: 112–113, l. 211; and see Stiehler-Alegria Delgado 1999: 255).[7]

Line 4 mentions Ninurta, who may be the god with a horned crown depicted on the seal (Zomer 2018: 72, n. 284). Alternatively, in light of the depiction of the *apkallu* priest, this god may be identified as Enki /Ea, with whom the *apkallu* figures were often associated (Goodnick Westenholz 2004: 58, no. 12). Another possibility, based on the cross symbol, is to identify this god as Marduk. In light of Matthews' classification of the seal as belonging to the First Kassite style, it can be dated, like the preceding two seals, ca. 1450–1250 BCE.

Conclusion

Jeanne Nijhowne, in her study of the symbolism of Mesopotamian cylinder seals in the second millennium BCE, observed that the predominance of prayers among the inscriptions engraved on the seals of the Kassite period and the large proportion of the seal's surfaces occupied by an inscription – at the expense of the visual scene, which is often reduced to a single divine or human figure – reflect a shift from the iconography of official religion to emphasis on personal devotion (Nijhowne 1999: 68). The seals BLMJ 2705 and 2706, published here, bear out this observation.

With regard to the seal BLMJ 2844 the matter is more complicated, since an incantation is not a prayer; it is a formula that possesses a power of its own, activated through some kind of magical mechanism, and does not, in principle, require volitional intervention of a deity. Nonetheless, some incantations appeal to a god's benevolence and ask for a deliberate action on his part; these are known as incantation-prayers (Lenzi 2011: 14, 24–35). While the text on the seal BLMJ 2844 is not formulated as an incantation-prayer, its mention of Ninurta suggests that the god was expected to play some role in protecting the seal owner from evil. Moreover, since an incantation is intended to secure protection from evil for a specific person, it is similar to a prayer in engaging with the realm of the supernatural for personal needs. Thus, BLMJ 2844 may be considered another expression of personal religion in Kassite Babylonia.

[6] Zomer numbered these lines 2–3 and 4–5, respectively, on the assumption of l. 1 that repeats the text of the final line. Her observation follows from the reconstruction of the canonical *Ḫulbazizi*-series by Finkel (1976).

[7] It appears that sag.giš da is a compound Sumerian verb, which might be a variant of sag.giš ra; the latter is rendered in Akkadian as *nêru* "to kill" (*CAD* N/2: 179a–b, s.v. *nêru*, lexical section). If this is indeed a variant of sag.giš ra, it would suggest the consonant /*dr*/ or /*r̂*/ (cf. Edzard 2003: 18).

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Chapter 30: "I have set My bow in the cloud": Symbolism and myth[1]

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Abstract. In this paper, we examine a case in which a narrative understandable to the contemporary viewer can appear in a textual context from a different period. Our case refers to the biblical narrative in which God places His bow in the cloud ("I have set My bow in the cloud") that appears at the end of the tale of the flood in the book of Genesis (Genesis 9: 12–17) and to similar descriptions and artistic depictions of gods and rulers holding a bow and arrows in the art of the Ancient Near East.

The bow in the cloud is usually referred to as the natural phenomenon of a rainbow. Here, we suggest the possibility that it combines a reference to memory of distant myths in which the bow as a weapon or hunting tool represents a metaphor for a covenant between God in heaven and living creatures on earth. Since the possible coexistence of diverse cultural legacies in one arena implies some kind of communication between the corresponding cultures, we must also assume the possibility of the use of the same symbol in diverse contexts.[1]

Keywords: bow, rainbow, flood story, Genesis, Gilgamesh Epic, Broken obelisk, glazed brick of Tukulti-Ninurta II, Ninurta struggling with Anzû.

Every system of concepts and expressions, verbal or visual, used for human communication contains elements that originated in ancient and often forgotten practices and perceptions, which can hardly be reconstructed and understood. Deciphering the complexity of the visual language as it is embodied in the art of the ancient Near East is no exception to this rule. As is well known, such decipherment underpins Tallay Ornan's extensive research into intercultural communication (Ornan 2005b: 207).

One may imagine, for instance, that such communication could link the biblical stories that employ verbal descriptions and lack artistic representations, e.g., the vivid narrative in Genesis, with akin stories from the Assyrian world from the ninth to the seventh centuries BCE, which are accompanied by abundant artistic representations. Several scholars and commentators have already pointed out the similarity of a number of intriguing elements between these two cultures. A case in point is presented in the following discussion, focusing on the description of the bow in the biblical story of the flood (Genesis 9: 12–17), and selected visual representations in other cultures.

The bow in the Biblical flood story

According to the biblical narrative, at the end of the flood, a rainbow appeared in the clouds as a sign of the covenant between God and all life ("flesh") on earth:

> "[12] And God said: 'This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: [13] I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. [14] And it shall come to pass when I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow is seen in the cloud, [15] that I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. [16] And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.' [17] And God said unto Noah: 'This is the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth'." (Genesis 9: 12–17)

Figurative representations of the bow in the sky at the end of the flood story often show a colorful rainbow, such as in the Greek manuscript dated to the eleventh

[1] This paper, linking a single visual depiction with different cultural legacies, was written under the inspiration of Tallay Ornan, who in her classes at the Institute of Archaeology in The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as in many conversations we held over the years, presented the complexity of the artistic image in the ancient Near East as representing different conceptual ideas. During the writing of this paper, we consulted her on various issues and, as always, she generously contributed much of her knowledge and for that we thank her.
We would also like to thank Wayne Horowitz, Uri Gabbay, and Daphna Tsoran for their contributions to this paper and finally special thanks to Nava Panitz-Cohen for her skillful editing and valuable comments.

century CE, (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. Gr. 747, fol. 31r; Weitzmann and Bernabò 1999: 55–56, no. 147 and color fig. 3). Such depictions continued an earlier tradition whose initial traces can be seen in the Vienna Genesis from the sixth century CE (Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, cod. theol. gr. 31, fol., 3r; Lowden 1992: 41–42, 50). Notably, this visual image is not evidenced in Roman or Byzantine Jewish art, but as a matter of fact it should also be kept in mind that very few Jewish artistic illustrations of these periods have survived.[2]

While the image of a rainbow in the sky has entrenched itself in the modern mind as the one meant in the biblical text, one can ask whether this is the only artistic expression that can be assigned to describe a covenant between God and man in the ancient Near East. Alternatively, we may indeed consider that the bow in Genesis actually implies an image well-known in ancient art, namely a bow used by an archer for military or hunting purposes. As we will see below, there are a variety of depictions showing such a bow, one of which has clear connotations of being connected to the relationship and covenants between deity and human.

The flood in Sumerian and Akkadian literature

A list of Sumerian kings composed in the Early Babylonian period divides time into two – before the flood and after the flood. The figures mentioned before the flood show mythical aspects and lived for very long, essentially inhumanly possible periods, while the figures mentioned after the flood gradually approach a realistic existence. The content of this Sumerian list resembles the biblical story of Genesis, which refers to the figures mentioned before the flood in an analogous way.

The flood tradition is also known from numerous cuneiform sources.[3] According to the version preserved in the Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic, during his travels, Gilgamesh meets Ūta-napišti, who survived the great flood by fulfilling the god Ea's tasks to abandon his worldly possessions and create a giant ship in which his wife, family, relatives, and animals were saved. Ūta-napišti is recognized as akin to the figure of biblical Noah in Genesis. This episode is already part of the Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic in the second millennium, but is best preserved in the first millennium version known from Assurbanipal's library (ca. 650 BCE). The flood is also a central theme in the Atrahasis epic over these same 1000 years. Notably, in all the cuneiform sources, the idea of a rainbow or bow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant between deity and mankind is missing (Horowitz 2016: 41–45).

It is interesting to point out that one of the Sumerian names for rainbow, tir.an.na, can be understood as the tir of an.na, the bow of heaven, thus paralleling the bow in the sky, the קשת בענן, 'bow in the cloud' in Genesis.[4] The surviving Late Bronze Age fragment of the Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic from Megiddo and from Ugarit show that the flood story was known in Canaan, despite the fact that it is not mentioned in the Canaanite mythology (Horowitz 2016: 42 and 45 note 16).

The bow image as a weapon

The bow image is common in visual depictions of war and hunting taking place on earth. In such depictions, however, one must distinguish between an outward bow and a turned bow. In most of them, the outward bow appears in the hands of rulers, warriors, kings, or gods with the bowstring towards the target, the enemy, or the hunted animal. The turned bow appears in the hands of the ruler or warrior who ended battles. Thus, the turned bow has a symbolic implication: it shows that the threat had been removed (Wilkinson 1991: 84–86; Westenholz 2000:105; Szudy 2015: iii, 30–35, 49–59, 64–77).

Such visual imagery symbolism appears in the Narām-Sîn Victory Stela scene representing Narām-Sîn's glorified deification kingship: Narām-Sîn shows up as a king who established order against the forces of chaos. (Wilkinson 1991: 84–87; Westenholz 2000: 101–107 and 115–117; Szudy 2015: 35–45; Niederreiter and Sass 2018: 279–290). The turned bow may then assume a more general meaning beyond Narām-Sîn's tale, such as to say it may be one of the expressions in the visual art of "triumph, a specific gesture of dominance and, above all else, order over chaos" (Westenholz 2000: 104–105, 108–110, 112–113, 115–117, 123–125).

This visual representation of the turned bow is present throughout the second and first millennia BCE, (Wilkinson 1991; Westenholz 2000), as well as in the texts of Šamši-Adad I of Assyria (1808–1776 BCE) (Westenholz 2000: 109). It remains associated in the viewer's consciousness for thousands of years as a visual sign of the king as an agent of god's power to maintain world order and defeat the forces that bring chaos to earth (Westenholz 2000: 103, 107, 117, 120). As such, it is analogous to the biblical concept of God's promise following the flood to prevent global destruction.

[2] For this scholarly contribution we wish to thank Sarit Shalev-Eyni and Lihi Habas.

[3] There are countless modern editions and studies of the flood story in cuneiform. Readers will find a convenient summary in Schmidt 1995.

[4] Credit and thanks to Wayne Horowitz for this observation. We would like to point out that this paper was completed and submitted before we became familiar with the Rendu Loisel and Verderame article which deals with the Sumerian term *tir.an.na* for rainbow. For their detailed discussion see Rendu Loisel and Verderame 2017.

Due to the bow's role and importance, it accompanies Mesopotamian, as well as Canaanite deities for thousands of years. It is present in texts and in depictions of various struggles as a weapon together with the arrows. It appears in Mesopotamian and Canaanite mythology as a divine gift to the king or as an attribute that accompanies a number of gods, including Ishtar, Assur, Adad, or Ninurta (Westenholz 2000: 108; Szudy 2015: 27–32, 354). It is associated with the symbolism of breaking the enemy's bow, e.g., in the Assyrian victory, or of the royal rule in visual illustrations of the king holding one bow in one hand and two arrows in the other (Szudy 2015: iii; 30–35). In Canaanite mythology, Anat the hunter with her martial characteristics, is accompanied by a bow. The Aqhat Epic has described Anat's tricks in the course of her attempts to obtain Aqhat's beautiful bow, fashioned and given to Aqhat by the divine craftsman Kothar-wa-Hasis, (Day 1992: 181–184; and 1999: 37–38).

The bow in the sky

On a number of occasions, the artist chose to show a bow held by a divine figure in the sky. A clear image of this kind is seen on top of the Broken Obelisk located close to the Ishtar Temple in Nineveh (Figure 1). It celebrates the end of Aššur-bel-Kala's struggle (1073–1056 BCE) against his enemies, identified by Tallay Ornan as two Aramean tribal leaders that are shown on the obelisk as defeated hostages. In this image, a winged, doubtlessly divine being's hand presents a turned bow without arrows to the Assyrian king's outstretched

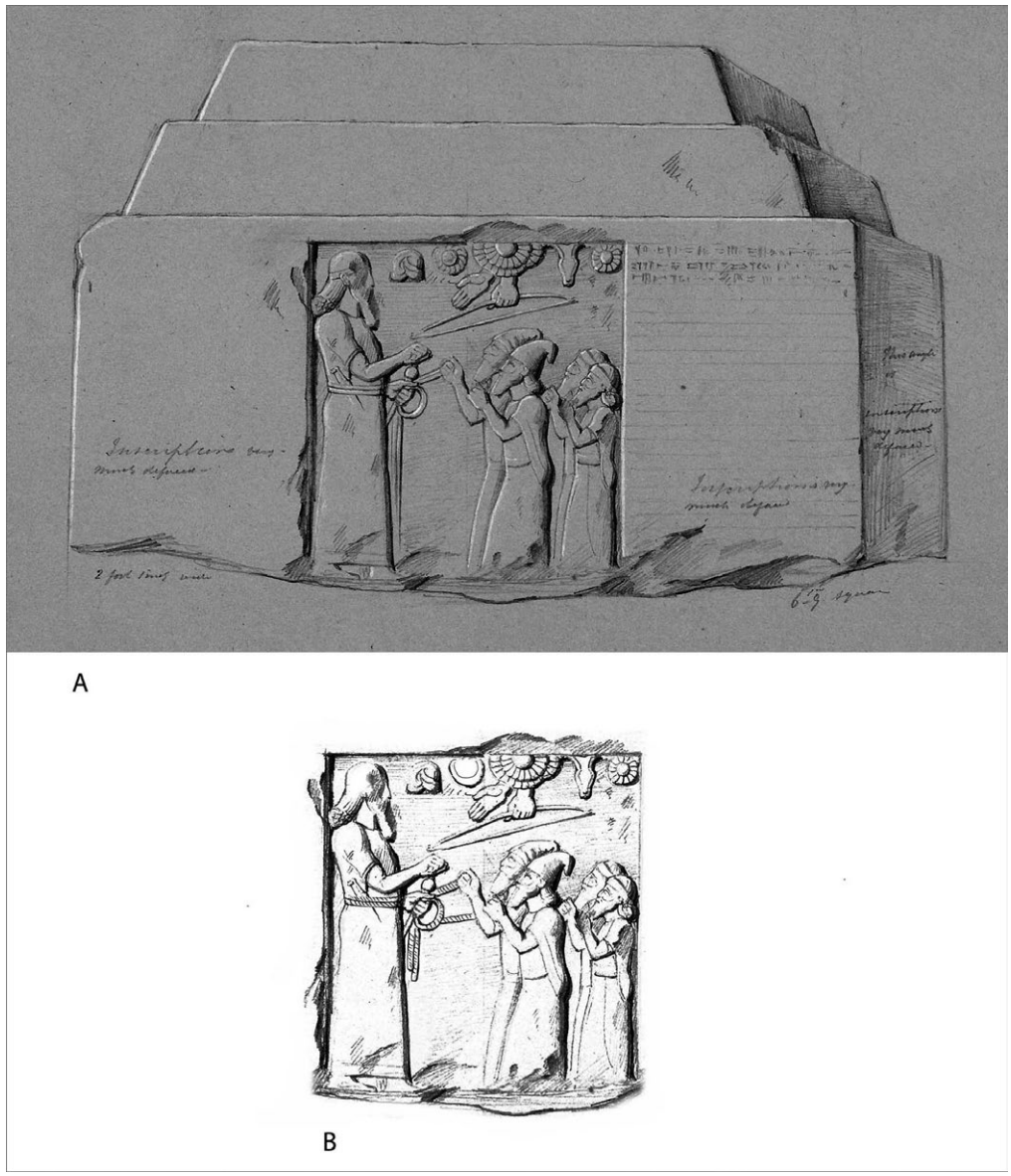

Figure 1a–b. Broken Obelisk. a) Charles Hodder or William Boucher drawing (Curtis 2007:53, © The Trustees of the British Museum); b) after Hodder or Boucher drawing and Curtis suggestion (Curtis 2007:53, 55 and fig. 4).

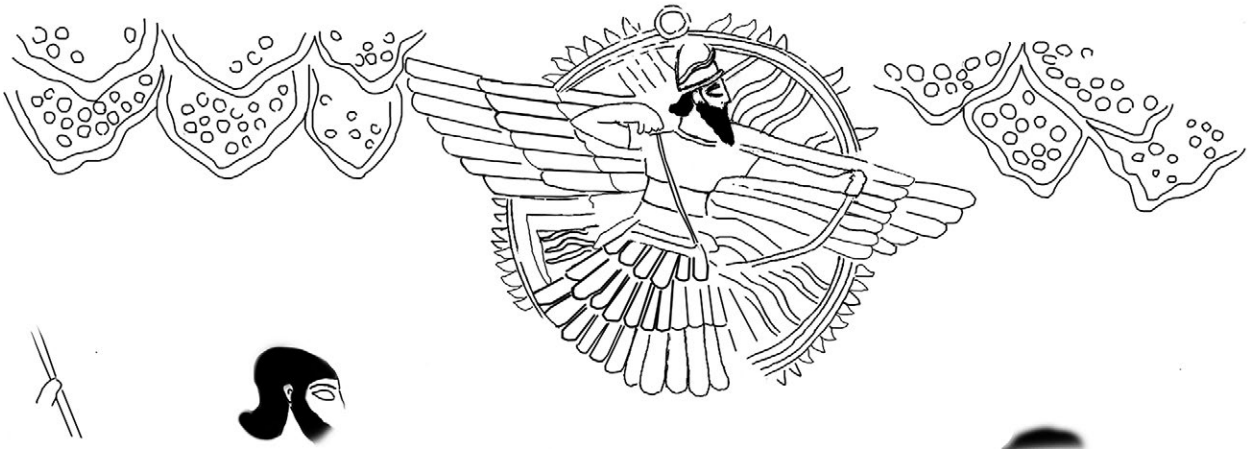

Figure 2. Glazed brick of Tukulti-Ninurta II, BM 115706
(after https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1922-0812-175).

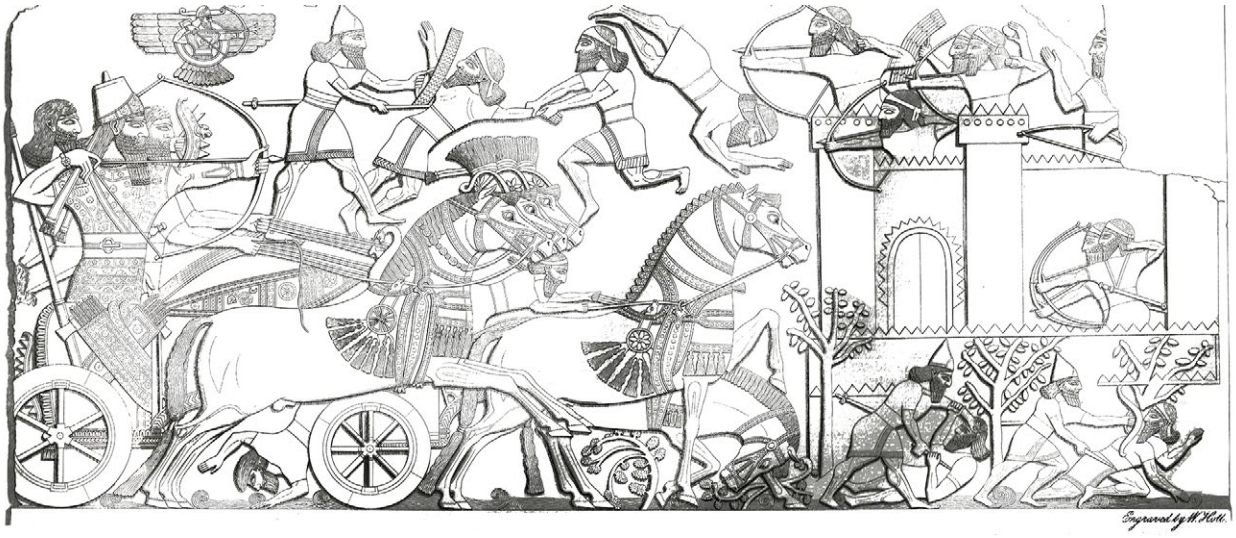

Figure 3. Slab 3a in Throne Room (Room B) of Assurnasirpal II Palace at Nimrud (Layard 1853: pl. 13).

hand, a gesture that has been interpreted as a sign of establishing the king's legitimacy (Westenholz 2000: 116–117; Black and Green 2004: 42; Ornan 2005b: 211 and 2007: 59–64; Curtis 2007; Szudy 2015: 35–38; Batto 2021: 103–105).

The bow held by a divine figure in the sky also appears on a fragmentary polychrome glazed tile of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890–884 BCE) in a military context. In this case (Figure 2), an anthropomorphized winged disc shooting archery is shown among rain clouds above the figure of the Assyrian king who fights his enemies (Batto 2021: 103 and note 16). The identification of the anthropomorphized winged disc as a divine winged being riding above the earth (רוכב בערבות) is strengthened by its similarity to the anthropomorphized winged disc present on the relief in the Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) North-West Palace at Nimrud (Figures 3–4). In that

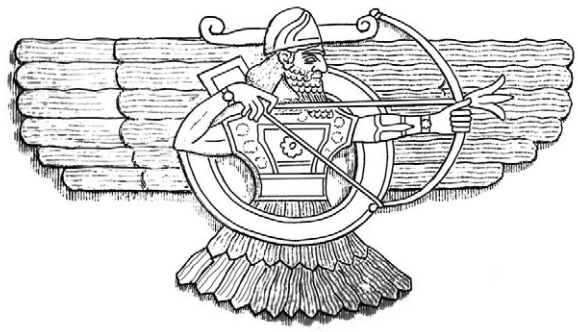

Figure 4. Deity in a winged disc firing a triple-tipped shape arrow, Slab 3a in Throne Room of Assurnasirpal II palace at Nimrud (after Layard 1853: pl. 13).

case, Ashurnasirpal II is shown in combat in his chariot as the sovereign king arching his bow, while above him, in a similar posture, appears an anthropomorphized winged disc wearing a horned hat which undoubtedly defines it as a divine being.

Scholars are uncertain about the identification of that divine being with a specific god. Several options could be relevant: the deity could be Aššur (the main god in Assyria), Šamaš (or his vizier Bunene Ṣalmu), or Adad (Ornan 2005b; Winter 2010: 27–28; Szudy 2015: 28; Batto 2021: 112–113). The candidacy of Ninurta was also taken into consideration, but found little support among scholars (Black and Green 2004: 143; Niederreiter and Sass 2018: 288; Batto 2021: 112).

In our opinion, the suggestion of Ninurta should be reexamined. The winged deity shooting the arrow that appears on Slab 3a in Throne Room (Room B) of Assurnasirpal Palace at Nimrud (cf. Figures 3–4), could, in fact, be Ninurta. Our proposal is based chiefly on the triple-tipped shape of his arrow. Such an uncommon shape appears in the hands of Ninurta in cylindrical seals. Two of them are Neo-Assyrian (Figures 5–6) and show Ninurta struggling with Anzû. A similar view appears on the Foroughi cylinder seal (Figure 7), dated by Porada earlier than 714 BCE. (Porada 1993: 579–581; Szudy 2015: 30). The Ninurta arrow is called "fierce arrow" in the curses of the succession treaty of Esarhaddon, in which the treaty-taker (Humbareš, king of Nahšimarti his descendants, etc.), is warned that if he violates the treaty, Ninurta will "fell you with his fierce arrow" (Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 46, line 425; Szudy 2015: 27).

The most pronounced aspect of Ninurta's character was his warlike nature. Therefore, it is appropriate that he accompanied Assurnasirpal in his battles (Black and Green 2004: 142–143; Ornan 2005a: 105–107; Batto 2021: 98). The triple-tipped arrow can reasonably be identified as one of Ninurta's attributes. It is consequently likely that the choice of Ninurta as a companion of Assurnasirpal in combat is related to his particular position during Assurnasirpal's kingship as reflected in the construction of Ninurta's temple in the city of Kalah and the setting of Ninurta among the 'great gods', perhaps at the head of this group (Porada 1993: 581; Uehlinger 1999: 628; Black and Green 2004: 99, 142–143; Ornan 2005a: 87–89).

The end of the combat is also portrayed in Ashurnasirpal II North-West Palace at Nimrud (slab 5a; Figures 8–9). There, the king, returning from battle in his chariot, holds his bow pointing downwards, but rotated in his grip so the string is lowest in a realistic depiction of a convenient and perhaps common way to hold a bow when one does not intend to use it immediately (Szudy 2015: 30–35). Above him appears a winged deity holding a bow in his left hand in the same way as the king holds his bow. The right hand of the deity does not hold two arrows (similar to the king figure) but is raised in a benedictory gesture.

Figure 5. Neo-Assyrian seal presumably depicting Ninurta struggling with Anzû (after Porada 1948: no. 689E).

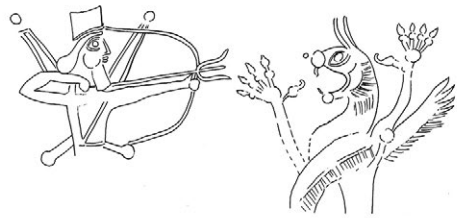

Figure 6. Neo-Assyrian seal depicting Ninurta struggling with Anzû (BM 89533, after Collon 2001: pl. XXIV no. 288).

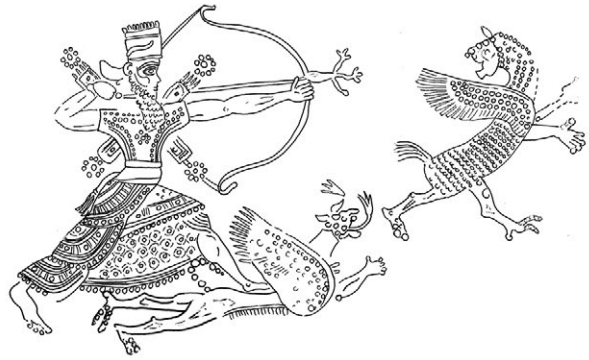

Figure 7. Ninurta struggling with Anzû, Neo-Babylonian, late 8th century B.C. Collection Mossène Foroughi (after Porada 1993: 580, fig. 46).

Such a visual representation fits the idea of ordering chaos by the king with the blessing and help of the great gods, and corresponds to the engraved inscription in the North-West Palace at Nimrud, according to which there is a divine approval for the king's governmental institution (a concept that had been preserved since the days of Naram-Sin):

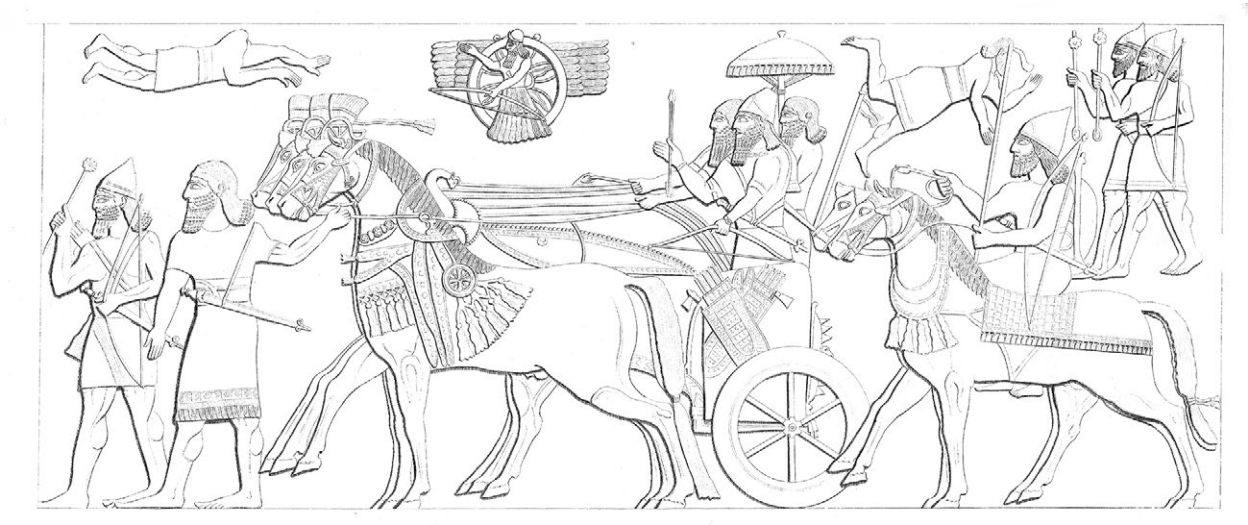

Figure 8. Slab 5a in Throne Room (Room B) of Assurnasirpal II Palace at Nimrud (Layard 1853: pl. 21).

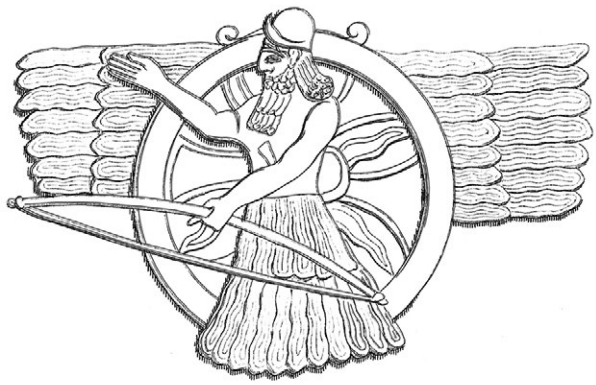

Figure 9. A deity in a winged disc hold unturned bow and its right hand is raised in a blessing gesture, Slab 5a in Throne Room of Assurnasirpal II palace at Nimrud (after Layard 1853: pl. 21).

> "(Property of) the palace of Assurnasirpal, vice-regent of Aššur, chosen of the gods Enlil and Ninurta, beloved of the gods Anu and Dagan, destructive weapon of the great gods, strong king, king of the universe, king of Assyria... marvelous shepherd, fearless in battle, mighty flood-tide which has no opponent, the king who subdues those insubordinate to him, he who rules all peoples, strong male who treads upon the neck of his foes, trampler of all enemies, he who breaks up the forces of the rebellious, the king who acts with the support of the great gods, his lords, and has conquered all lands, gained dominion over all the highlands and received their tribute, capturer of hostages, he who is victorious over all countries" (Grayson 1991: 275; Westenholz 2000: 118–120).

In this inscription, Assurnasirpal boasts that he was chosen by Enlil and Ninurta, whom we proposed to identify as the winged deity, who shoots a triple-tipped arrow and accompanies the king during his war. It should finally be noted that bringing the stability of civilization is one of Ninurta's qualities which is represented in his fight against Anzû and the theft of the tablet of destinies from Enlil.

In summary, the god, who carries his turned bow in the sky, can be identified with the same Ninurta who fought together with Assurnasirpal and now gives his blessing in his right hand on earth, clearly an expression of the end of the war and the establishment of cosmic peace.

The bow as a metaphor for the token of the covenant between God and living creatures

Is it possible that such a visual representation is somehow related to the rainbow mentioned at the end of the biblical story of the flood? An expectation of this kind would, of course, need some logical supposition in order to establish a link between the image of a warrior god settling down from shooting arrows from his bow and that of the biblical God avoiding destroying living creatures by a flood. Such a link might well be the notion of the arrows of the biblical God, occurring several times in the Bible (e.g. Deut. xxxii, 23, Deut. xxxii, 42, 2 Sam. xxii, 15, Hab. iii, 11 and many more). In that case, setting the bow in the cloud would hint at both, a residue of distant myths and a metaphor for the covenant between God and living creatures on earth.

The possibility of using the same symbol (the bow in the cloud) in diverse contexts with assorted meanings results from the possibility that two separate cultural legacies operate simultaneously in one cultural area.

Such a possibility occurs thanks to the existence of different cultural agents set up in different ways, for instance, professional doctors differently instructed (e.g. according to classical knowledge such as the books of Plinius, or religious knowledge such as rabbinic literature, or any other kind), authors and artists differently instructed (according to the traditions inherited in their specific areas), statesmen differently educated (following historical or rabbinic literature), and so on.[5]

Conclusions

The written flood legend is known in cuneiform sources from numerous sources. In all of them, however, the idea of a rainbow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant between God and mankind is missing. The mention of God setting his bow in the cloud in the end of biblical story of the flood (Genesis 9: 12–17), bears resemblance to the visual depictions of the divine figure in the sky holding a turned bow as expression of the war's end, establishment of cosmic peace and dominance of order over chaos. This symbolic implication is known in Assyrian visual art already in the 11th century BCE.

Such a scene appears on the ninth century BCE illustration of Ashurnasirpal II ending combat, depicted in the North-West Palace at Nimrud. There the winged deity above the king appears holding a turned bow in his left hand (in the same way as the king holds his bow) and his right hand is raised in a blessing gesture. In our opinion, in this case the divine figure should be identified with Ninurta rather than the common identification with Aššur (the main god in Assyria) or Shamash. In the scene depicting the battle, which precedes the triumphal parade, Ashurnasirpal II is shown fighting in his chariot as the sovereign king arching his bow, while above him, in a similar posture arching a bow, appears the anthropomorphized winged disc wearing a horned hat which undoubtedly defines it as a divine being. The deity fires an uncommon, triple-tipped shape arrow comparable to the arrows in the hands of Ninurta in cylindrical seals, where this figure struggles with Anzû. Ninurta's arrow is called "fierce arrow" in the curses of the succession treaty of Esarhaddon and therefore, it resembles the most pronounced aspect of Ninurta's warlike nature. Therefore, it is appropriate that the triple-tipped arrow can reasonably be identified as one of Ninurta's attributes and to conclude that he is the deity who accompanies Assurnasirpal in his battles. It is likely that Ninurta's selection by Assurnasirpal II, to accompany him in his battles can be related to that god's particular position during Assurnasirpal's kingship. This is reflected in Assurnasirpal's construction of Ninurta's temple in the city of Kalah and setting Ninurta among the "great gods", perhaps as the head of this group.

If so, Ninurta who fought together with Assurnasirpal, now gives the king a blessing with his right hand while holding the turned bow in his left hand, clearly expressing the end of the war and the establishment of cosmic peace.

The image of a warrior god settling down his arrow can be linked to the image of the biblical God avoiding destroying living creatures by a flood. In that case, setting the bow in the cloud would both allude to a remnant of distant myths and serve as a metaphor for the covenant between God and living creatures on earth.

[5] Medieval Jewish scholar and statesman Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508) displays a striking example of this kind of intercultural communication. Profoundly erudite in both cultures, the Jewish, rooted in rabbinical literature, and non-Jewish, rooted in the Greco-Roman classical world, Abravanel alluded to such a paradigmatic link between the rays of the sun and the arrows of mythical Apollo riding in the sky (see the detailed argument in the annotated Hebrew edition of his commentary on the Pentateuch, "Chorev" Publishing House, Jerusalem 5767 [1967], vol. I, pp. 291–296). A different example was offered in our time by University professor and rabbi Umberto (Moshe David) Cassuto (1883–1951). In his commentary on the relevant segment of Genesis, he suggested that the verses describing the end of the flood are but a tiny residue of the ancient epos that exposed lengthily the story of the flood as did other myths that circulated on that matter in the ancient East. According to Cassuto's submission, in those myths, the flood was described as a war run and finally won by a god shooting arrows from his bow; as a symbol that the war came to end, the god set his weapon (the bow) on the cloud and promised that he would not make war again. To Cassuto's mind, the anthropomorphic image of God shooting arrows from his weapon did not fit the Torah's outlook and approach; such a full-fledged image was therefore avoided, though the less demanding allusive concept of the arrows was kept (Cassuto 1959: 91–96). For additional examples, see Bonfil 1989: 107–113, esp. p. 111.

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Chapter 31:
The symbol of the triumph[1]

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Abstract. It is in spite of being known for almost two full centuries, that a frequently addressed Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal, engraved with an elaborate composition, is still not fully dated, and understood. Within the said composition, the present study focuses on the horseman's tunic and the trident symbol for their inferred chronological-historical contribution.

Keywords: cylinder seals, Haldi, Khorsabad, Muṣaṣir, Rusa I, Rusa II, Sargon II, trident symbol, Urartu.

It is in spite of being known for almost two full centuries, that a frequently addressed Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal (Figure 1), engraved with an elaborate composition, is still not fully dated and understood.[2]

Description of the Modern cylinder seal impression

A worshipper faces divine symbols in the field above, a horseman following an upright horned animal and a bovine suckling its young. A trident is depicted below. On the right, a beardless worshiper is facing left, pointing with his right finger, while the left hand's palm is open upwards. He is wearing a fringed robe, and a heavy bracelet on each wrist. An upright trident is set in the ground in front of him. The worshipper faces six divine symbols in the upper field: A winged disk (Assur?), the star of Ishtar, moon crescent of Sin, stylus and spade of Nabu and Marduk, and the Sebitti, "Seven dots", or Pleiades. Below, a beardless, helmeted soldier in an oblique net-pattern tunic, is moving away on

Figure 1. Nineveh, BM WAA 89331, a. © Courtesy trustees of the British Museum, b. Wiseman 1959: 78.

[1] In appreciation of the author of *The Triumph of the Symbol*.
[2] BM WAA 89331, from Nineveh. Blue quartz chalcedony, height 4.0 cm, diameter 1.75–1.85 cm. Cf. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1825-0503-135

Figure 2. Khorsabad (Loud and Altman 1938: 98 no. 87, Pl. 57: 87).

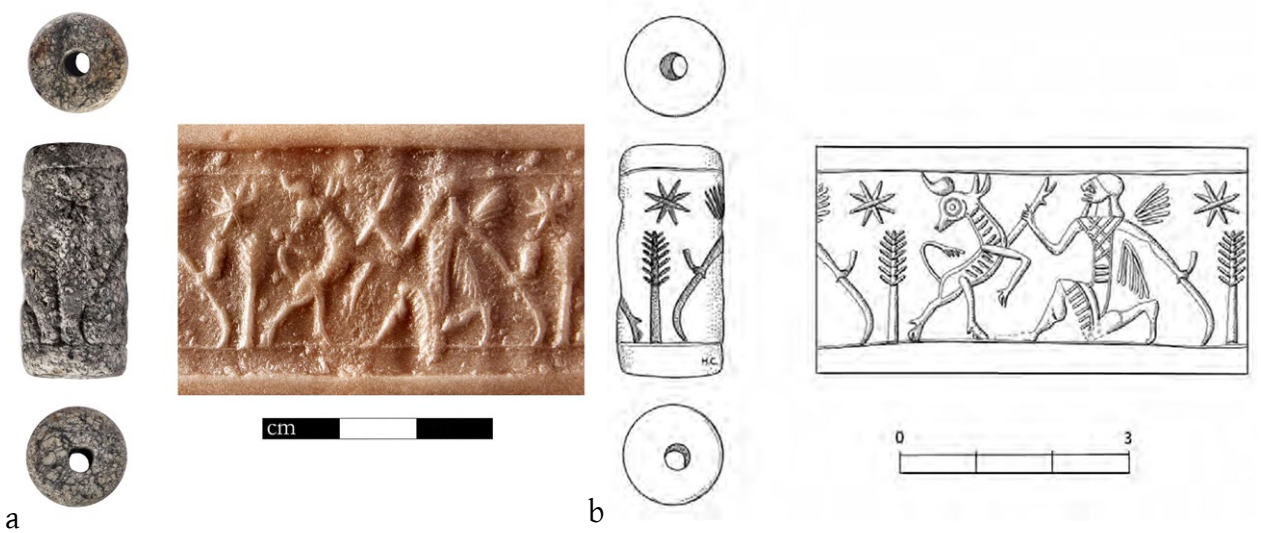

Figure 3. Omrit (a. Baruch Brandl; b. Brandl and Grossmark 2016: 167).

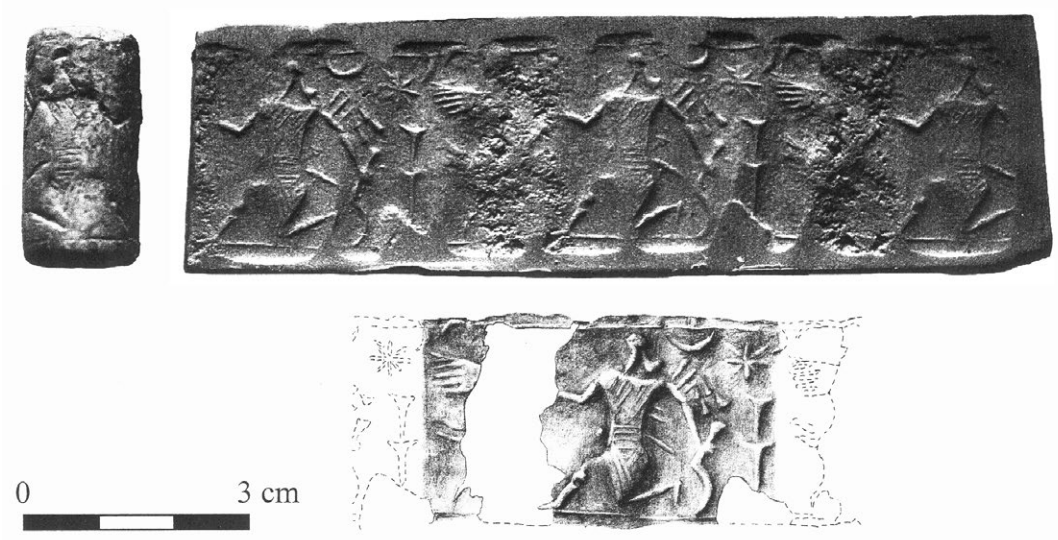

Figure 4. Bassetki (Puljiz 2015: 114–116).

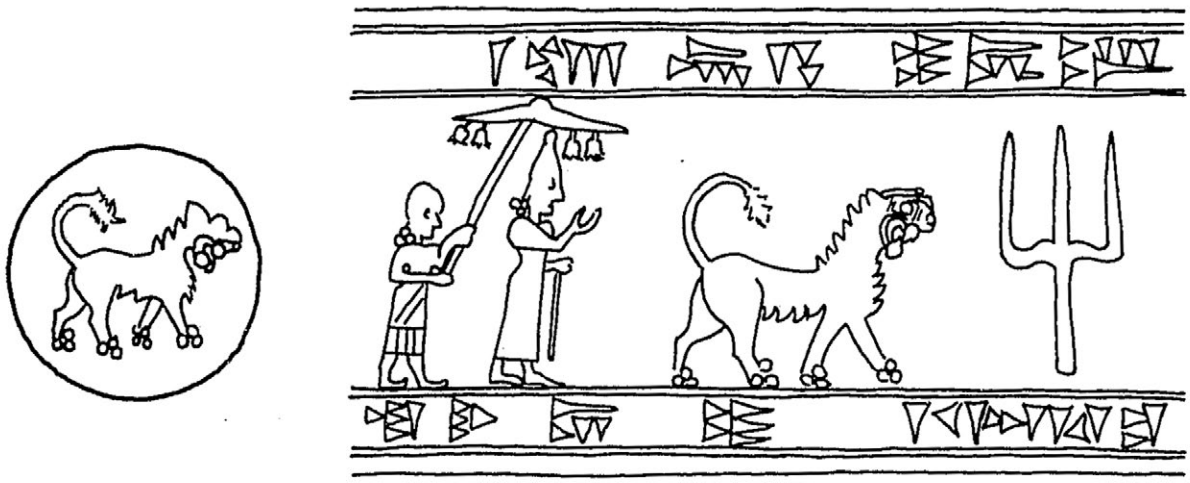

Figure 5. Bastam (Seidl 1988: 146).

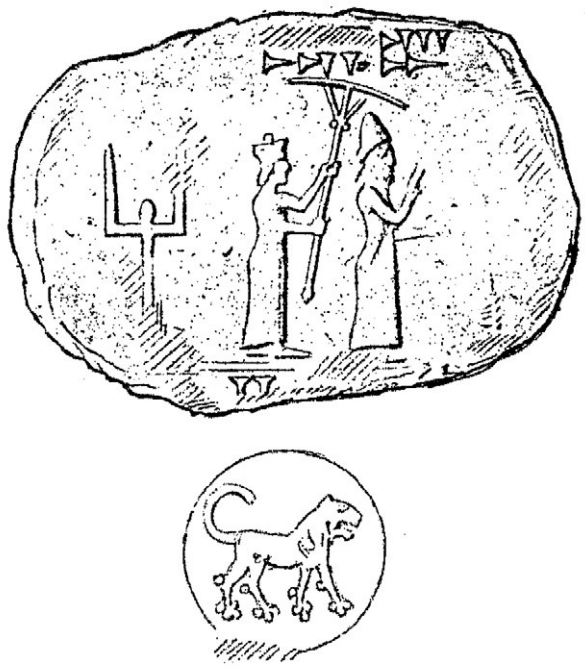

Figure 6. Toprakkale, Seal 1 (Seidl 2001: 451).

horseback. The horseman follows a mountain antelope, its kid(?) running under the horse. The scene to the very left shows a cow suckling her calf.

The present study focuses on the horseman's tunic, the trident symbol, and their inferred chronological-historical contribution.

Published perceptions

The worshipper and the horseman. As these two are beardless, Collon (2001: 215 *in fine*) raised the possibility that they depict one and the same person.

The horseman's tunic. Collon did not find a parallel for the tunic, in my view the best piece of evidence for dating the seal.

The trident. H. Frankfort (Frankfort 1939: pl. 34: i, and list of plates on p. xxxv) overlooked it, whereas D. Collon (Collon 2001: 115, pls. 7: 215 and 40: 215), following E. van Buren (van Buren 1945: 68–70 (E3a)), identified it as a triple lightning that could symbolize the gods Adad or Ninurta. She had also pointed out the occurrence of a trident on impressions of Urartian royal stamp cylinders.

The dating. D. Collon attributed the seal to the late ninth or early eighth century BCE by its cutting technique and style. In her opinion the horse's plume and the horseman's helmet and sword belong to the time after Shalmaneser III (died 824 BCE) and before the accession of Tiglath-pileser III (745 BCE).

New proposals

New parallels for the tunic. In recent years two new *excavated* cylinder seals joined a much longer-known, dated parallel of the tunic, to create a trio *clearly produced in the same workshop* (Figures 2, 3, 4):

- One cylinder seal was excavated at Khorsabad the new capital city of Sargon II.
- Another cylinder seal was excavated at Horvat Omrit in the Upper Galilee, Israel.
- Yet another cylinder seal was excavated at Bassetki, in Iraqi Kurdistan.

All three seals show a combat between a hero (on the second find – a genie[3]) and a bull.

[3] For another Genie in such combat, but on an unprovenanced cylinder seal, see Teissier 1984: 150–151, no. 152.

The horseman, the worshipper, the trident, and a new suggested dating and historical setting

If there is any merit to my workshop suggestion, the Nineveh seal may also have been produced at Khorsabad, and if so, during the reign of Sargon II (721–705 BCE). In that case the seal may be assigned a narrower time span. The worshiper and the horseman, *who may be the same person* (Collon above) may depict one of the king's eunuchs.[4] Taking D. Collon's proposal of a connection between the trident and Urartu a step farther, we suggest that the symbol reflects Sargon's eighth campaign against Rusa (I) son of Sarduri II of Urartu (ruled 735–714 BCE) in 714 BCE . We infer this, based on later bullae found in Bastam (Iran) and Toprakkale (Van, Turkey), depicting a trident (Figures 5, 6),[5] of "Rusa (II) son of Argishti" who reigned during the seventh century (685–639 BCE). If so, the trident on our cylinder seal would be the earliest attestation of this symbol in Urartu. The eighth campaign was probably the most meaningful event of Sargon's reign, which we deduce, since it is reported in the king's letter to his god Assur (Levine 1977; Elayi 2017: 229–231; Frame 2021: 271–307, figs. 24–26). In that campaign, Rusa (I) committed suicide, and the statue of his god Haldi was carried off from the city of Muṣaṣir to the city of Assur.

The trident is an addition to the finished seal.[6] It is cut over both the plinth of the Marduk's spade, and one of the worshiper's feet.[7] We suggest therefore that the cutting of the symbol of the god Haldi was commissioned by the seal owner to commemorate the campaign of the year 714 BCE , perhaps owing to his own participation in it.

To sum up

It is here suggested that the production of the BM cylinder seal WAA 89331 post-dated the founding of Khorsabad in 717 BCE , whereas the trident[8] has been added after the taking of Haldi's statue from Muṣaṣir to Assur in the eighth campaign of Sargon II in 714 BCE (Frame 2021: 25, Table 1).

[4] See for example, a slab from Sargon II palace: Albenda 1986: pl. 88 (Room 7, slab 10).

[5] Collon 1987: 87, no. 401, p. 129, no. 556. For an enlarged photo and a drawing, see Zimansky 1979: 53.

[6] Collon (2001: 115) failed to notice that the trident was engraved later.

[7] This situation has not been shown in one drawing (Keel 1980: 127, fig. 107, based on Frankfort 1939: pl. 34.i) but is seen in another (Wiggermann 2006: 216, fig. 156, based on Wiseman 1959: 78, where the right dot of the Sebitti is missing).

[8] For the explanation of the connection between the trident and the god Haldi, see Baştürk 2011.

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Chapter 32:
The soldier and the exorcist:
A cylinder seal in the Ashmolean Museum

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Abstract. In 1922 a cylinder seal was lent to the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, by a British army officer who had acquired it in Baghdad. This article explores the modern history of the seal in the context of the museum's approach to collecting in a colonial setting and the subsequent interpretation of its carved imagery in relation to so-called Lamaštu plaques of the first millennium BCE. An analysis of the imagery concludes that the seal is in fact a modern fake and one of a number of objects inspired by the narratives presented on ancient Lamaštu amulets.

Keywords: amulet, British Army, cylinder seal, demon, exorcist, fake, Lamaštu, Pazuzu.

Identifying figural and symbolic imagery requires knowledge of both iconography and texts combined with an understanding of Ancient Middle Eastern cultures. It is such research that Tallay Ornan excels in. This article makes no such claims, but in her honour will revisit a cylinder seal in the Ashmolean Museum. The article is in two parts, first tracing the seal's acquisition history, followed by a re-examination of its imagery.

The seal of interest was lent to the University of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum in 1922. The museum was then under the leadership of David Hogarth who had been appointed as Keeper (equivalent to Director) in 1909.[1] He established a "West Asia Section" and, because ancient seals were of particular interest to him, Hogarth actively developed a collection by purchasing from dealers as well as through acquisitions (both purchase and gift) from travellers to the Middle East. The latter is recorded, for example, in his first report to the museum's Visitors (Trustees):

> "Two sets of miscellaneous seals collected in Syria by Miss Gertrude Bell and Mr T.E. Lawrence respectively" (Hogarth 1909: 8).

It was, however, the First World War and the invasion and occupation of Mesopotamia by armies of the British Empire that created conditions for the ancient Middle East collections in Oxford to be significantly enlarged.[2] This initially took the form of further antiquarian "collecting" and donations but often now as a result of military activity and connections:

> "A marble figurine of the earliest Sumerian style (AN1919.65), which was unearthed in a slightly damaged condition at Istabalat by an entrenching party on the eve of battle preceding our occupation of Samarra in 1917 ... From Assur itself (also thanks to the passage of our troops) has been received a stamped brick from the palace of Shalmaneser I (AN1919.63)" (Hogarth 1922: 7).

Indeed, it was not unusual for soldiers of the Mesopotamia campaign to gather small collections of ancient objects, usually portable items such as cuneiform tablets, terracottas and seals. These "souvenirs" might then be brought to Britain during periods of leave or redeployment. One such collection was gathered by a certain Lieutenant-Colonel Kenlis Langley Stevenson.

The soldier

Stevenson was born in 1875 in Trichinopoly (modern Tiruchirappalli) in the Madras Presidency (now Tamil Nadu) of British India. He followed his father – a British officer in the Madras Native Infantry – into the army, graduating in 1895 from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, south-east London.[3] Commissioned as an officer of the Royal Artillery and subsequently serving with the Royal Ordinance Corps, Stevenson took part in six campaigns, including the South African War (1899–1902), the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900–1901), and the First World War, serving in Egypt (1915) and then as commanding officer of an ordinance depot in France.[4]

[1] For a history of the formation of the Ashmolean's Ancient Middle East collections see Collins 2022.

[2] Thousands of objects would be acquired through a division of finds from a major joint University of Oxford/Field Museum, Chicago excavation at the site of Kish between 1923 and 1933, for which see Moorey 1978.

[3] For Stevenson's birth and family, see "Colonel Kenlis Fergus Stevenson 1839-1917" National Archives, India Office Record IOR/L/AG/23/10/1 no. 5190; Montgomery-Massingberd 1976: 75.

[4] Stevenson's medal card records him in Egypt in 1915, see National Archives, War Office WO 372/19/49584. Other details of his military

Following the end of the World War, Stevenson was posted to Mesopotamia in the aftermath of the crushing of the 1920 Iraqi revolution against the British Mandate occupation. By January 1921, Sir Aylmer Haldane, commander of British forces in Mesopotamia, had dispatched a large number of troops to the area of Shatrah, northeast of Nasiriyah, as a show of strength that was intended to encourage the disarming of local tribes. The result, as articulated in the colonial language of the time, was that "the cowed natives then allowed access to places where at other times a Christian life would be in danger" (Smith 1929: 5). This offered opportunities for antiquarian investigations that Haldane, as he makes clear in his own words, was keen to enable:

> "Not far from Hal river are some or the oldest mounds or remains of ancient cities in Mesopotamia. which were the abode of Sumerians or Southern Babylonians : and as one of my staff, Lieut.-Colonel K. L. Stevenson, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, who is an amateur archaeologist and can read the cuneiform writing,[5] was about to proceed to Samawah for inspection duty, I arranged that he should travel to Karradi with Brigadier-General Dent's column and then transfer himself to that of Brigadier-General Coningham. In company with the Political Officer, Captain Thomas, who earlier had done much good work in keeping the Muntafiq in check, he returned later from Nasiriyah and made some excavations at Umma, the constant rival and eventual destroyer of another ancient city, Lagash (about BC 4000), a report on which he sent to the British Museum."[6]

Later that year or early the next, Stevenson approached Stephen Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford University:

> "Colonel Stevenson of the Mesopotamian army has brought to Oxford a clay cone of Libit[sic]-Ishtar, duplicate of B.M.114683 published by Mr. Gadd, Early Dynasties of Sumer and Akkad, pl. iii. The Arab who brought it to Colonel Stevenson claimed to have dug it up at Bahriyat, 17 miles south of Nippur. The officer identified the cone himself and suggested to me that Bahriyat is Isin. Bahriyat seems to be one of the mounds of a large tell called Bahri, which is not described as a tell on the Ordnance Map. He says that the tell consists of a series of mounds of considerable size and is very accessible to Diwaniyeh, about equally distant north-west of the Euphrates."[7]

Stevenson returned to Oxford in July 1922 with a collection of cuneiform tablets and cylinder seals. Langdon records the outcome in a letter to Hogarth:

> "Oxford. July 6.
>
> My dear Hogarth,
>
> Col. Stevenson is here and I have worked the two seals and one fine tablet from him.[8] The other tablets I have carefully copied and got ready for publication.[9] I saw at once that it would not be wise to ask for the seals outright and got them as an indefinite loan. I have no doubt about getting them definitely some time. Please exhibit as a loan from Col. KL Stevenson. The large cylinder seal in 4 registers represents priests and the seven devils who are in combat, the priests endeavouring to expel the demons by mystic symbols. The upper register contains symbols of the 7 Pleiades, sun, moon, and three other symbols not explained. The whole must be made the subject of a monograph. The seal is probably Babylonian not Assyrian and about 10th century.
>
> The other seal is of Gudea period, about 27th century having the old procession before a seated divinity, the owner being led before a god by his protecting goddess and followed by a menial with goat offering. Behind the god a minor deity his attendant with the *uragallu* or sacred spear. I shall be away in Paris until the end of next week.
>
> Yours S.L.
>
> Col. S. is today at the Clarendon Hotel. A note to thank him would be useful."[10]

career are recorded in Smith 1929: 4-5 and Hamilton 1946: 249.

[5] How Stevenson learned to read cuneiform is unclear. A number of universities, including Oxford, Cambridge and London, offered formal teaching in Assyriology at this date. Theophilus Pinches, who taught at University College London from 1900 to 1932 also gave private tuition (Irving Finkel, personal communication). There is no evidence that Stevenson attended any of these classes. He would however, have been able to undertake his own study using published grammars, for example Oppert (1868) and Pinches (1910), as well as books specifically intended to introduce the cuneiform script and Akkadian language, such as King (1898). Meanwhile, early work on the Sumerian language was available through publications such as Thureau-Dangin 1905.

[6] Haldane 1922: 293. The minutes of the Trustees of the British Museum record that a letter was received from Colonel Stevenson in February 1921. The correspondence itself does not survive but a separate excavation report is in the archives of the Middle East Department; I am grateful to Angela Grimshaw of the British Museum Central Archives for her exhaustive search.

[7] Langdon 1922: 431. Ishan al-Bahriyat was visited by Langdon for a day to conduct a sounding while he was excavating at Kish in 1924, see Langdon 1924: 109; Dougherty 1926. Major excavations at Bahriyat, which indeed proved to be ancient Isin, were undertaken over eleven seasons between 1973 and 1989 by a team of German archaeologists led by Barthel Hrouda (1977-1992).

[8] The three objects were purchased by Col. Stevenson in Baghdad in 1921, as noted in the "loans book" of the Ashmolean Museum's Department of Antiquities, July 1922.

[9] Langdon 1922-1923a.

[10] Original letter preserved in the object record file, Department of

Figure 1. Speckled green serpentine cylinder seal (55 × 19 mm) and modern impression, Ashmolean Museum, Stevenson Loan 1, LI1254.1. Photo: Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

The larger of the cylinder seals will be my focus here (Figure 1). The second seal (now dated to the Agade Empire) as well as a cuneiform tablet have been published elsewhere.[11] All three objects would subsequently enter the Ashmolean's permanent collections.[12]

First, however, some words on the subsequent career of Colonel Stevenson. He retired from military service in 1925 but maintained an interest in the ancient Middle East, publishing two short articles on biblical topics (Stevenson 1928 and 1929). In addition, and using Kenlis Langley as a pen name, he wrote a novel set in a lost world that was discovered by boy adventurers in North Africa (Langley 1929). In 1929 Stevenson was appointed Warden of the Student's Memorial Union at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada and the following year settled in Port Hope, Ontario, where he taught German, Ancient History and Mathematics at Trinity College School (Figure 2). It was here, as recoded in the school report, that Stevenson died in 1946:

> "As the academic year drew to a close the School was shocked by the sudden death of Col. Stevenson who suffered a heart attack while engaged in his favourite pastime of bowling a few practice overs on the cricket pitch. He would be remembered not only for his scholarship but for his abiding interest in the boys of T.C.S." (Humble 1965: 149).

The exorcist

Over a decade would pass between the arrival of the seal at the Ashmolean and its publication by Stephen Langdon in an article discussing Babylonian and Hebrew demonology and dualism:

> "This hitherto unpublished seal in the Ashmolean Museum shews one of the representations of the seven devils; I refer now to the second register; there are eight animal-headed demons on this monument. The corresponding bronze plaque, Catalogue de Clercq, II, pl. XXXIV, has seven devils, viz., panther, lion, dog, sheep, wild ram, vulture, and serpent. They are famous as ferocious beasts in mythology, to describe their

Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum.

[11] For the seal (Ashmolean Stevenson Loan 2; LI1254.2) see Buchanan 1966: 70, no. 385; van Buren 1951: 59; Boehmer 1965: no. 1492, 115-117. For the so-called "Stevenson Omen Tablet" (Ashmolean AN1922.202) see Langdon 1922-23b; Böck 2000; Schreiber 2019.

[12] A letter in the Ashmolean object record file dated February 4th, 1947, from Nathaniel Micklem, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, to the Keeper of the Ashmolean, records that Stevenson's son understood his father "intended the exhibits as a positive gift and not as a loan. As far as I am concerned that is how I would interpret his wishes in the matter."

Figure 2. "The T.C.S. Staff, June 1933" (Humble 1965: pl. II-14). Lt.-Col. Stevenson stands in the back row, second from right.

> hostile nature. The demons are usually called the wicked *udug* or *utukku."* (Langdon 1934: 50–51).
>
> "In the third register of this seal is a woman in child-birth, being protected by two priests at her head, while the serpent-headed devil attacks her at the foot. In the lower register is the terrible she-devil Lamme. She was the baby-killer, the dreaded child-seizer of Sumerian and Babylonian religion." (Langdon 1934: 52).

Langdon recognized that the seal's imagery and its arrangement into distinct registers paralleled an unprovenanced bronze plaque first published in 1879 (Figure 3).[13] A number of comparable metal and stone plaques were known by the early twentieth century and their relationship with ritual incantations preserved in cuneiform texts had been recognised.[14] These were intended for use by exorcists in rituals to avert evil causing sickness in a person and are generally referred to as Lamaštu amulets, named for one of the most dangerous supernatural forces confronting humans.[15]

Lamaštu occupies a unique role in the Mesopotamian pantheon as both a daughter of the sky god Anu but also "an almost satanic force, a personification of evil and aggressiveness" (Farber 2014: 3). No other demon has such a clear mythology as known from surviving texts of the second and first millennium BC. Everybody was vulnerable to attack from Lamaštu although it was her targeting of pregnant women and young children that was especially terrifying (Wiggermann 2000). By the first millennium BCE Lamaštu's iconography had become standardised and she is shown as a monstrous composite often with the head of a dog or a lion with (in the art of the ninth to seventh centuries BCE) ass's ears, a hairy or spotted body with naked breasts, long fingers and the talons of a bird; a piglet and a puppy suckle at her breasts and she holds snakes in her hands.

[13] Clermont-Ganneau 1879. For a full bibliography see Heeßel 2002: 129.

[14] Frank 1908. For Lamaštu amulets known by 1930, see Heeßel 2002, numbers 15, 16, 24, 25, 27 (fake), 28, 29 and 30; Panayotov 2020: figs. 6.1, 6.7, and 6.9.

[15] Panayotov (2020: 129, no. 2) prefers the term Lamaštu-Hulbazizi amulets given that inscribed examples often have an incantation known as Hulbazizi ("Eradicate that evil!"), for which see Farber 2014. The power of the visual images meant that written incantations could be excluded from amulets, creating generic, universal defence against the threat or attack of evil from demons, ghosts and witches (Wiggermann 2000: 223; Panayotov 2020: 153).

Figure 3. Obverse of bronze Lamaštu plaque (133 × 84 × 25 mm), Louvre Museum, AO 22205. Photo: de Clercq 1903: pl. XXXIV.

The images carved on amulets were intended to drive Lamaštu back to the underworld; she can be depicted riding a donkey and/or a boat that floats along the Ulâ river, which will carry away the demon and the sickness she causes. Included in the scene are objects that act as apotropaic bribes intended to encourage her to leave: a comb, a mirror, a spindle, and the lower leg of a donkey. One of the most effective ways of driving Lamaštu away, however, was to evoke her most powerful adversary, the wind demon Pazuzu.[16] On amulets Pazuzu is sometimes depicted beside Lamaštu, in attack posture, striding with one arm raised looking at her, but he can also appear, as in Figure 3, on the back of amulets with his head reaching over the edge to look at the viewer (presumably intended as the suffering patient).

In addition, the sick person themselves can be depicted lying on a bed in association with standing mythological or human figures. The latter can be understood as the specialist healers, the exorcist (*mašmašu/ašipu)* and physician (*asû)*, who undertook the necessary rituals and applied medicines.[17] To achieve success they evoked the power of the great gods and other demonic forces as represented in the uppermost registers of the amulets. In this way all of the actors in the ritual are made present through the imagery, which describes an active narrative linking the gods of heaven with the sick person and their healers in a bedroom and the driving out of Lamaštu to the netherworld.

[16] Nils Heeßel (2002, 2011) has surveyed the evidence for Pazuzu, which takes the form of portable amulets in the shape of the demon's head, fibulae and seals as well as plaques. He concludes that the majority of such objects can be attributed to the seventh and sixth centuries BCE with some continuity into the Seleucid period.

[17] Geller 2010: 48-52; Arbøll 2021: 7-8.

Stevenson's seal has been understood as belonging within this broad corpus of amulets (Meissner 1935: Abb. 1; Goff 1956: pl. 2a; Moorey, 1976: 45, pl. XXXI; Collon 1987: 173, no. 804; Wee 2014: fig. 5). Briggs Buchanan (1966: 111–112, no. 612, pl. 40) published the seal in a catalogue of the Ashmolean's cylinder seals, tentatively accepting it as genuine. His conclusion will now be tested by paying particular attention to the images of Figure 3 as well as other comparable amulets and seals.

Heaven

The top register contains symbols of the major deities of the Assyro-Babylonian pantheon. They provide the divine power to avert evil and remove sickness. In their arrangement they follow first millennium *kudurrus* where divine symbols can be shown in one register and arranged in a row at the upper part of the monument (Ornan 2005: 109–110). On Neo-Assyrian royal stelae there are usually five such symbols placed in front of the king: a horned mitre (probably Aššur), a star (Ištar), a winged disc (Šamaš), a crescent moon (Sin) and a lightning bolt (Adad). Seven dots representing the *sebetti*, a group of beneficent gods, occasionally occur on monuments. From the time of Adad-nirari III, the *marru* spade of Marduk and the stylus of Nabu appear on royal stelae (Ornan 2005: 139, 149–151) and, in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, a ram-headed sceptre associated with Ea can be included.

All these symbols appear in the first register of the plaque in Figure 3, arranged from left to right: horned tiara, ram-headed staff, three-branched thunderbolt, spade and stylus, star, winged disk, crescent moon, seven dots. Finally, below the *sebetti*, is depicted a lamp, the symbol of Nusku (Ornan 2005: 121–122). Comparable symbols are shown on other amulets although their number and order are not consistent, which may have been dictated to some extent by available space or the choices of the amulet maker.[18]

Some of the symbols on the Stevenson seal are recognisable: a crescent moon, seven dots and an eight-pointed star. There are however novelties: an additional star, a round-bottomed vessel(?), and two bisected lentoid shapes (eyes?), none of which can be matched in ancient glyptic or sculpture. What may be intended as a three-branched thunderbolt is included but this looks more like a plant with leaf-like terminals (as identified by Buchanan 1966: 111).

Beneficent spirits in the bedroom

The second register of Figure 3 contains a row of seven figures each with a different animal-head. Wiggerman (1992: 71; 2000: 248) has equated these with seven apotropaic 'standards' (*urigallu)* that ritual texts indicate should be positioned on the walls and in the corners of a patient's bedroom.[19] As such they can be understood as beneficent spirits whose power can be harnessed against evil demons. They are shown in profile moving from left to right with their right fists raised in an attack posture. Their distinct characteristics are reflected by their diverse heads: panther, lion, wolf, ram, ibex, raptor, and serpent. When depicted on other Lamaštu amulets, there is consistency in the *urigallu*'s direction of movement, posture and variety of forms, although occasionally there are six figures rather than seven (e.g., Figure 4).[20]

The second register of the Stevenson seal presents demons of only two types: four identical figures with dog-like heads raise their right hand with palm facing forward and move from left to right towards an incense burner (an object never encountered in this register on the amulets). Moving from right to left towards the burner are four identical figures with griffin heads each carrying a hooked staff over their left shoulder.

The sick man

The third register depicts the patient. With his right arm raised, he lies on a bed flanked by two mythological fish-*apkallu.* At the far left is a stand with a lamp of Nusku, while on the right two *Ugallu* spirits and a *Lulul* spirit standing protectively with their right arms raised in attack posture.

All the sick individuals on amulets can probably be identified as male; detailed representations show them as bearded (Wiggermann 2000: 246). The patient can be shown with one or both hands raised, a gesture signalling he is saying an incantation prayer (Panayotov 2020: 149). The majority of Lamaštu amulets depict the sick bed as having legs and a rounded headboard or pillow that is orientated to the left.[21] Very occasionally, when there is limited space on the amulet, the bed is reduced to just a mattress with a headboard/pillow (Panayotov 2020: 136, figs. 6.5 and 6.6). Nevertheless, it was probably important to indicate that the bed was raised above the floor as this highlighted a place where, according to the most common incantations, evil could lurk:

[18] Symbols identified from left to right: moon, winged disk, horned crown, star (Heeßel 2002: no 16); horned crown, moon, winged disk, star, seven dots (Heeßel 2002: no. 20); horned crown, moon, winged disc, star, thunderbolt, spade and stylus, seven dots (Heeßel 2002: no. 25); seven dots, star, winged disc, moon, horned crown (Panayotov 2020: fig. 6.1).

[19] For an alternative identification for these figures see Seidl and Sallaberger (2005-6).

[20] Six demons (Heeßel 2002: no. 15); seven(?) demons (Heeßel 2002: no. 7); six demons wearing knee-length skirts (Heeßel 2002: no. 25); six(?) demons (Heeßel 2002: no. 26); seven demons (Heeßel 2002: no. 29); seven demons (Pottier 1917: no.106).

[21] For a patient with his head oriented to the right see Heeßel 2002: no. 21).

Figure 4. Lamaštu amulet from Babylon (24 × 48 × 12 mm), Ashmolean Museum, AN1998.19. Photo: Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

> "Incantation : something that comes from under my bed made me shrink for fear and gave me terrible dreams." (Wiggerman 2000: 246).

Wiggermann (2000: 246), has suggested that the amulet makers selected the most important participants and acts in the rituals and then presented them in the "flat world of ancient art". Building on this, Panayotov (2020) proposes that the imagery can be reimagined back into a three-dimensional bedroom. In this way the *Ugallus* and *Lululs* can be understood in the scenes as fulfilling their traditional duties of protecting doorways against supernatural intruders.[22]

On some amulets one or both of the mythological fish-*apkallu* are replaced with their human equivalents, the *mašmašu/ašipu* exorcist and possible also the *asû* physician,[23] although the latter may not have visited the patient at home (Geller 2010: 51–52). The lamp of Nusku, god of firelight that counters the darkness of night when such exorcistic rituals are undertaken (Wiggerman 2007: 108), is depicted at the head of the bed (for another example see Heeßel 2002: no. 25), a location that would be expected based on descriptions in the ritual texts (Panayotov 2020: 148). On some amulets the lamp is replaced by an incense burner, used to fumigate the patient (Panayotov 2020: 150).

A different form of a sickbed scene is known from a number of Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals. One example, a broken serpentine seal, was excavated from vaults beneath the Northwest Palace at Nimrud (al-Gailani 2008: 157, fig. 19-k). It closely parallels a complete but unprovenanced seal in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem (Oshima 2013). Both are divided into two registers, with the top scene depicting a procession with the Assyrian king in a wheeled throne pulled by a pair of men who, accompanied by officials and divine symbols, face two figures (priests?) with standards. The lower register is especially significant here and the scene is focussed (placed immediately below the image of the king) on a curved reed structure. Inside this hut a healer can be seen leaning over a sick person who is prostrate on a triangular "bed", his head to the right

[22] Kertai 2015. Wiggermann (2007: 111) classifies the Ugallu as a "Day Demon" associated with the positive aspects of daylight. Heeßel (2011: 367) suggests that Ugallu and Lulul are necessary to control Pazuzu and unleash his power in the right direction.

[23] In the Neo-Assyrian period *mašmašu/ašipu* and *asû* were among a range of scholars and skilled craftsmen (*ummânu)* who are understood as the successors of the antediluvian *apkallu*, for which see Lenzi 2008: 106-120; Collins 2010: 186. See amulets: two anthropomorphic healers (Panayotov 2020: fig. 6.1); fish-*apkallu* at the head of the bed, anthropomorphic healer at its foot (Heeßel 2002: no. 20); anthropomorphic healer at head of bed, fish-*apkallu* at foot (Heeßel 2002: no. 25).

(on the impression) supported by a pillow and assisted by a kneeling figure. Above the reed structure are astral symbols and the dog(s) of Gula, goddess of healing (Black and Green 1992: 101). Two other cylinder seals with this scene, one excavated at Tell Halaf (Hrouda and von Oppenheim 1962: 34, pl. 23/9) and the other unprovenanced (Teissier 1984: no. 231, 170–171), depict a comparable healing scene but in only one register. The reed hut can be equated with the *šutukku* of texts and is associated with exorcism rituals conducted by the *ašipu* (Geller 2010: 51). As such, it was presumably situated in a different space than the bedrooms represented on the Lamaštu amulets. John Wee (2014) has proposed that the scene may depict healing through exposure to celestial bodies but the fact that the activity takes place within a reed structure that shields the patient from the heavens might reason against such an interpretation. An alternative explanation is offered by Nathan Wasserman (2008) who argues that these seals show an *asû* (*contra* Geller 2010: 51–52) holding a knife for letting blood as part of a medical procedure using leeches. All four seals are carved from serpentine, which Lamia al-Gailani (2008: 157) suggests may have had a healing significance.

How does this correspond with the third register of the Stevenson seal? The male (*contra* Langdon 1934) patient lies on a mattress rather than on a raised bed and without the usual headboard or pillow. In the impression he is oriented with his head to the left as on the majority of amulets, which could suggest that the seal cutter intended that the sealing rather than the carved cylinder should take precedence (an approach also favoured in modern seal catalogues). Two figures in different garb stand at the patient's head, between them a standard where one might expect a lamp or incense burner. Above the patient floats a winged disk, a symbol unknown outside the uppermost register of the amulets. At the man's feet are two demons with monstrous heads who apparently attack him, one with a spear and the other with a bident.

Who are these demons? Only Lamaštu is an evil being with a defined iconography; it was "[p]erhaps for fear of conjuring the actual demon with the image, (that) the Mesopotamian iconography of evil has remained very restricted" (Wiggermann 2007: 109). Given that amulets (like much Mesopotamian imagery) should be understood as active objects, narrating but –crucially – making real the ritual activities depicted on them (Collins 2019; Panayotov 2020), it would be extremely foolhardy (and unlikely) that any ancient artist would choose to depict such a demonic attack.[24]

[24] Human illness is attributed to being touched, perhaps violently, by either a god, demon or ghost, and described in medical texts as the "hand of a god" rather than through the use of weapons (Geller 2020).

The underworld

In the lowest register we encounter Lamaštu. Shown in profile and facing right, she crouches on one knee on the back of a donkey, itself kneeling in a boat with a lion's head at the prow and a goat or cow's head at the stern. To the left of the scene stands Pazuzu in attack posture with a raised fist. He is depicted in canonical form with a canine-like grinning face with big eyes, a scaly body, a snake-headed penis, the talons of a bird, a scorpion's tail and wings. Floating on a river filled with fish that swim from left to right, the boat carries Lamaštu towards reeds and the apotropaic bribes that will speed her journey to the netherworld.

Not all Lamaštu amulets include a donkey (e.g. Heeßel 2002: no. 25) and frequently only the head of Pazuzu is depicted, positioned so as to face the demon (Heeßel 2002: nos. 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 31). In addition, the apotropaic bribes can be represented in different combinations. Occasionally, a figure that can be identified as Bidu, Gatekeeper of the Netherworld, is placed on the far right of the scene (Panayotov 2020: 147–148, figs. 6.11 and 6.13).

The Stevenson seal depicts very few details that offer similarities with the above descriptions. Sitting in a boat, a central figure is shown frontally with arms outstretched and legs akimbo; the figure's head is unlike that of Lamaštu and this has created doubts about the seal's authenticity for some researchers (Buchanan 1966: 111; Wiggerman 2000: 248, no. 202). The boat is formed from a snake-like dragon with the horned head (presumably the prow) facing left on the impression. It is flanked by two scorpions, an unusual feature as when scorpions appear on amulets only one is shown and placed between the legs of Lamaštu (Wiggerman 2000: 239). On the left of the boat is a monster that might be intended as Pazuzu; on the right stands another monster with trident hands which, along with the curled and winged(?) horned serpent, have no known parallels.

Conclusion

The analysis of the imagery of the Stevenson seal shows what has long been acknowledged, that in its themes and basic organisation it has a passing relation with Lamaštu narrative plaques. In its detail, however, the seal carver has misunderstood the meaning and relationship of the figures and objects in every register and as such it cannot be accepted as an ancient object. The one redeeming feature of the seal is that it is carved from serpentine, which, by choice or chance, connects it with ancient cylinder seals but ones that depict a different and very specific scene of healing. No genuine

Figure 5. Modern impression of cylinder seal (72 × 15 mm), Louvre AO 6604. Photo: Delaporte 1920: pl. 93, no. 7.

cylinder seal with Lamaštu themed imagery has been identified.

The Stevenson seal has been compared with a cylinder in the Louvre divided into five registers (Figure 5). There are extremely close parallels between the sickbed scene in the third registers of both seals where the patient lies on a mat with the same posture of arms raised and knees bent. The imagery of the other registers on the Louvre seal appears, however, to derive from different themes of Mesopotamian glyptic, from top to bottom: combat, libation, sickbed, presentation, boat god. This seal, which is made from an unusual blue vitreous material, has been appropriately condemned as "a modern fake".[25]

The faking of cylinder seals (as part of a larger industry in forging of Middle Eastern antiquities) was already thriving by the late nineteenth century (Menant 1888). This was shaped by fashion as well as the latest discoveries. It seems very likely that the publication of a number of Lamaštu plaques by the early years of the twentieth century, including its most famous example in Figure 3, generated an interest by forgers

[25] Buchanan (1966: 111), who found it hard to accept "that two seals with such elaborate scenes based on the same theme, but clearly by different artists, should both be fakes"; he therefore tentatively accepted the Stevenson seal as genuine.

Figure 6. Obverse and reverse of a bronze plaque, unprovenanced (137 × 87 × 3.5 mm), British Museum 108979. Photo: The Trustees of the British Museum.

in reproducing the themes on seals, given that these objects were being sold to travellers in large numbers because of their attractiveness and portability (Collon 1987: 97). The Louvre cylinder seal was acquired by the museum in 1913 from the Iraqi-French antiquities dealer Élias Géjou.

Other forgers of this period attempted to reproduce bronze Lamaštu narrative amulets. One such example, I submit, is an uninscribed plaque in the British Museum (Figure 6). It was purchased by the museum in 1914 from the dealer Albert Amor who had acquired it from the collector Bernard Maimon. On the reverse a demon is represented as if looking over its shoulders. His unusual facial features have been explained as the representation of a different demon than Pazuzu (Frank 1941: 11, pl. II.2) or that it may be a provincial piece (Moorey 1965: 34). In a misunderstanding of the relationship between the figure on the reverse and Pazuzu's usual stance of looking at the viewer over the top of a plaque, an additional (very worn) head has been placed over the ritual scene depicted in four registers on the obverse. Here the imagery is equally problematic with scenes crudely cast in low relief. The top register, where one would expect divine symbols, contains a horse and rider, a crescent moon and star(?) an unidentified object and a standing figure; the second register has two figures flanking an animal with curved back; the sickbed of the third register is flanked by two figures with a star(?) in the field and two(?) other figures facing each other at the far left; finally, positioned high in the fourth register is a boat containing indistinct figure(s) with another figure(?) to the right. Like the Stevenson and Louvre seals, this plaque is clearly inspired by Lamaštu amulets but the details are confused by its modern maker. All three objects, however, found ready buyers in the early twentieth century given their association with some of the most compelling images of supernatural creatures that had emerged from Mesopotamia, the popularity of which remains undiminished (Graff 2014).

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Chapter 33:
Birds and gods in ancient Mesopotamia

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Abstract. The article deals with the different types of relationships between gods and birds, considering different environments in Mesopotamia in which birds dwell, specifically riverbanks and marshes, remote mountains, and the city. The article also discusses the ways in which birds were understood by ancient Mesopotamian scholars to represent the divine world for humans, whether as ominous predictions or as allusions to mythological episodes.

Keywords: birds, gods, nature, Mesopotamia, cuneiform, Sumerian, Akkadian.

Introduction

In the present article I will deal with representations of birds in relation to gods in ancient Mesopotamian sources, focusing mainly on texts.[1] Since the entire topic of birds in ancient Mesopotamian literature is too vast for this short article, the sources I will use are selective, and therefore the conclusions drawn from them are provisional. Still, I hope, some of the topics I will touch upon in this article may lead to further investigation of other topics related to birds, and to animals, nature, and gods generally.

While gods are often associated with various animals in Mesopotamian religion, their association with birds seems to be of a special character. This perhaps has to do with certain similarities between gods and birds. Both have access to the sky, both may also have access to the netherworld (and more importantly the ability to exit the netherworld after entering it, see below), and both have an elusive character – they are always there, but often difficult to spot, appearing and disappearing. Other features unique to birds, differentiating them from humans and other mammals, but also from other animals, may have led to their association with gods, such as their colors, their feathers, and their cries.

In the following I will focus on the relationship between gods and birds in ancient Mesopotamian sources from various periods, and will distinguish between three types of relationships according to the environments in which birds appear. I will then discuss the way birds are portrayed as bringing mythological messages into the human world in some texts, and will end the article with a short discussion on the different types of relationships between the gods and the birds. An excursus discusses two parallel examples from Jewish tradition.

The divine, human, and natural "worlds"

Before turning to the main topic of this article, birds, a few words are necessary regarding terminology. Below I will refer to the "divine world" or "divine reality," as well as to the "human world" and "natural world." While I do not think that such categorizations reflect emic Mesopotamian religious concepts, these terms are used rhetorically in order to facilitate the analyses undertaken in this article and are not intrinsic to the conclusions drawn here.

What I mean to demonstrate using this categorization of different "worlds" is that according to the ancient Mesopotamian view (or at least one such view), the "divine" (i.e., gods, but also divinity in general, see Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 7), as in other religions, has at least two levels. One level is inaccessible to humans, and is beyond the "natural, real world" experienced by humans (it is sometimes referred to with the loaded term "transcendent," see Rochberg 2011: 133).[2] This level of the divine is reflected in texts that refer to the "mystery" of the gods or to "secret" aspects of the gods.[3] It is also emphasized in texts

[1] The following article is not focused on art, but I hope it is still in keeping with Tallay Ornan's interest in understanding cultural representations and symbols in general in ancient Mesopotamia, relying mainly on artistic representations but not ignoring other sources such as texts and other archaeological remains (see Ornan 2005: 1–17). This article was inspired by the exhibition "Early Birds: Soaring with the Ancients" held in the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem during 2021. As part of the museum's activities, I gave a public lecture there on birds in Mesopotamia, and some of the topics addressed in that lecture were incorporated into the current article. I thank Yoram Cohen for reading and critically commenting on an earlier version of this article.

[2] I do not regard these levels as representing an evolutionary process, as was assumed by Jacobsen (1963) and often accepted in Assyriology. See now Sallaberger 2020. In any case, the points raised here are specific to the concerns of the present article, and I do not wish to contrast the perspective adopted here to other approaches to Mesopotamian religion found in Assyriology.

[3] See, e.g., the Sumerian noun ad-ḫal, and the Akkadian nouns *pirištu* and *niṣirtu*. See Lenzi 2008.

that deal with the "far" and "covered" characteristics of the gods, as seen most vividly in the Sumerian Emesal prayer-laments that often refer to the "far heart," i.e. the inconceivable essence, of the gods.[4] While this "divine world" is inaccessible to humans, the description of the inaccessible divine essence uses human characteristics: the gods think, speak, and act, i.e., they are anthropomorphic (Ornan 2009; Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 36–38).[5] Thus, the human-formed divine essence cannot be grasped by the humans who conceived of the gods (and in this sense the divine essence may resemble the human essence, the human "self" itself).[6] This level of the divine essence always remains removed from humans who live in the "human" or "natural" world, i.e., in what we consider to be the actual reality in which we live. This description of the "divine world" could fit what was called by Rudolf Otto (1917) a "mysterium tremendum et fascinans," but this is true of only one level of the divine. On another level, which is the main way in which humans encounter the divine, the god is not "mysterious" at all. This level is called here the "human world" or the "natural world."

While this "divine world" is entirely detached from the "human world" or "natural world," the "human world" or "natural world" is not detached from the "divine," and the "divine" can be detected in this world through different manifestations or presences, such as cultic statues, rituals, astral bodies, natural elements, or even mythological texts that relate stories of the "divine world" (see Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015). But these are all concrete manifestations of the divine, and not necessarily its essence (which lies in the "divine world"), and as such they can be considered messages, references, or indexes to the divine rather than the divine itself (compare Rochberg 2011; Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 18–23). On the other hand, since the divine itself is always inaccessible to humans, and actually does not "exist" (concretely), its "existence" in human terms can only be through these manifestations, and as such they do not *represent* the "divine essence" (which does not "exist" in human terms), but can be considered as the "divine" itself (i.e., a *presentation* or *presence* of the divine, and not a *re-presentation* of it; see Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 12–13 with references). In other words, while the "divine world" can be regarded as the "real" world of the divine, where its essence lies, while the divine in the "human world" is just a representation or manifestation of this divine, one can also view this in the opposite way: since the "divine world" is inaccessible, and it can never be encountered or grasped by humans, the only thing that is "real" about it is its manifestation in the "human world" or "natural world." Therefore, instead of looking for the "real" divine world, one can simply posit two levels, the "divine world" and the "human or natural world," without any hierarchical decision among them.

Lastly, the "real world' that we usually think of – what is referred to here as the "natural world" or "human world" – can in turn be differentiated into two worlds, "natural" and "human," according to how the divine is represented in each one. As was addressed by Rochberg (2016), it is very difficult to speak of the concept of "nature" in a society that did not define it (linguistically, but also not conceptually) as a category of its own. But while the border between nature and the "human world" is difficult to draw, the concept of the divine does show that some distinction can be drawn between the two. Thus, while the essence of the divine, acting as humans, is usually inaccessible to humans, and can only be present in the "human-natural world" through representations, this essence can be present in the "natural world," but only when this "natural world" is not merged with the "human world." Thus, in mythological times, according to the Mesopotamian worldview, as in the worldview of other religions, the gods *did* act in their "divine essence" as humans within the "natural world," but this is conceived to have occurred almost exclusively before humans inhabited the "natural world," and in any case was removed in time (even if not in space) from the "real world" in which humans now live. Additionally, some natural elements were conceived to be associated with divinity in their "pure" form, which is independent of humans, and only in cult and incantations could this pure or divine form of the "natural world" be acknowledged, retrieved, and used (Hurowitz 2006; Benzel 2015; Perdibon 2019).

In the following discussions on the relationship between birds and gods, I will refer to the definitions given above, and will attempt to see how birds – as representatives to some extent of "nature" – relate to the "divine," "human," and "natural" worlds categorized above. I will examine the relationships between the different elements in this divine-human-natural-bird connection, my premise being that what is important in fact is not the essence or characteristics

[4] E.g., Cohen 1988: 126: 57. Note that a literary way to describe the inaccessibility of this existence was to refer to the "far heart" as "like the sky," e.g., Gudea Cylinder A, vii: 4 (Edzard 1997: 73). Indeed, this inaccessible place where the gods act (as humans) is sometimes described as being in the sky, and could even be reached by (mythological) humans (such as Etana and Adapa) on very rare occasions.

[5] I will not discuss here the implications of this for Mesopotamian art. See Ornan 2005 and 2009.

[6] It should be noted that this perception is actually more complex. The notion of a divine "essence" is a product of human cognition (compare Pongratz Leisten and Sonik 2015, especially 5–6), and as such it is not surprising that it has an anthropomorphic form. But this does not exclude that there is a further level to this "essence" that human cognition regards as being beyond anthropomorphic form, even if it is unable to grasp this. This is a view held by various religions, and it is not unlikely that it was held (at least partially, or implicitly) by Mesopotamian theology as well. However, there is no direct, clear evidence for this, and in any case, the topic is beyond the scope of this article.

of each of these elements alone, nor its essence as opposed to the others, but rather the way they interact and relate to each other (compare Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 5–6).

Three types of avian environments

Different birds were associated with different gods in ancient Mesopotamia, and these associations varied in character. In the following I will distinguish three types of relationships between gods, birds, and different environments, namely the swamps and sweet waters of southern Mesopotamia, the mountains outside of Mesopotamia proper, and the urban landscape.

The marshes and riverbanks: Nanše and the goose

Mesopotamia, with its great rivers and canals, and with the marshes in its south, provides a vast environment for water birds, both as permanent residents and as migrators. Indeed, water birds, such as ducks, geese, and others, are of great cultural significance in Mesopotamia, as they are in Egypt and other areas of the Levant (Battini 2021; Greet 2021). The marshes and riverbanks, although mostly not part of the city itself, are not entirely separated from it and are not contrasted with the city. They are still in the city's vicinity and therefore related to it. In the following I will attempt to connect this characteristic of the environment of the marshes and riverbanks with the water birds that are found there, and with the goddess associated with the marshes, Nanše.

My main textual source for the marsh and riverbank habitat of birds is the Sumerian composition Nanše and the Birds (Veldhuis 2004: 115–142). The composition begins with a passage describing a water bird, probably a goose (Sumerian u_5, Veldhuis 2004: 294–295), in relation to the goddess Nanše. This is followed by a long list of the destinies of various birds, probably decreed by the "sharp-toothed" (Sumerian: zú-sis) bird, apparently to be identified in this composition with Anzu (Veldhuis 2004: 37: 135–136). The composition ends with a praise of Nanše.

In the following I will deal with the first part of the composition: emphasizing the relationship between the goose and Nanše. The beginning of the composition makes it clear that Nanše is associated, at times partly identified, with the goose. She acts just like the goose, to the degree that she is actually identified with the bird; but the two are also seen as separate from each other.

A couplet in the beginning of the composition establishes Nanše and the bird as two separate entities, even though they have a certain relationship between them (lines 6–7):[7] "My lady was attracted by her goose. The Lady mother Nanše was attracted by her goose." But in the following couplets the goddess is compared to the bird by an analogy that blurs the rigid distinction between the two (lines 8–9): "I am the Lady, how beautiful is my goose, and how beautiful am I! I am Nanše, how beautiful is my goose and how beautiful am I." In the following lines this analogy almost leads to an identification of the two: Nanše is compared here to a goose as well as to a cow, a common divine image, and both the goose and the cow perform the same actions (lines 10–13): "She (= Nanše) herself [descended] upon the water like a large goose; stepping onto earth from heaven, she [stood] in the water like a pure wild cow; a pure goose, a white wild cow [drank] water at the waterside."

In the next section of the composition, the goddess is portrayed as having the bird at her feet in her temple (lines 20–22): "Nanše, delighting in her goose, erected a lapis lazuli shrine and set the pure goose by her feet." This indicates that the two are not identical; rather, the bird acts as an attribute representing the goddess herself,[8] which is probably the case in iconographic representations of a goddess and a goose, the former possibly to be identified with Nanše, or in any case with a mother goddess or fertility goddess (see Battini 2006).[9]

Unlike, for instance, the association of the Anzu bird with Ninurta or Ninĝirsu through battle and conflict (see below), the association between Nanše and the goose is not antagonistic but rather harmonious: the goddess and the bird representing her do not have a history of struggle, there is no rigid hierarchical relationship between them, nor do they stem from places that represent different concepts (as in the conflict between Anzu, from the mountains, versus Ninurta, from the urban environment, see below). Rather, both the goddess and the bird are at home in the natural environment that is adjacent to the urban centers: the riverbanks and marshes, which although differing from the urban centers themselves, are not culturally distinguished from them, and are part of the larger urban (and positively viewed) environment and its resources.

By describing the relationship in terms of "harmony" I do not mean a utopian connection between the birds and urban life, but rather a reality in which birds, even when they interfere in human life, are not considered alien to it, but rather part of it, and this relationship is represented by the goddess Nanše. The next lines in

[7] Here and in the following, the translation follows Veldhuis 2004: 117–118.
[8] For the distinction between attribute and symbol, especially in art, see Ornan 2005: 169 (with references).
[9] Note that Battini (2006) suggests identifying the goddess with Inana.

the composition indicate this harmony (lines 23–24): "I am the Lady, let my birds assemble for me where the sheaves are gathered; I am Nanše, let my birds assemble for me where the sheaves are gathered." In these lines, the goddess calls the birds to assemble around her, but she does not refer to the environment of the marshes and riverbanks, but rather refers, as shown by Veldhuis (2004: 4), to the image of birds coming to feed on grain gathered by human labor. This is not portrayed as a nuisance (which it may have occasionally been) but as part of the regular interaction between humans and birds at the fields located near the urban centers as well as near the marshes, rivers, or canals.

To sum up, the connection between the goddess Nanše and the goose can be understood as that of an attribute or an emblem, but are not identified with each other.[10] This somewhat fluid relationship between the goddess and the bird fits well with the environment of the marshes and watercourses. They are not part of the city itself, but are nevertheless not alien to it, and not considered entirely separated from it. And Nanše, too, is not identified exclusively with the city or with the marshes. She is on the one hand a goddess living in the marshes, in charge of the birds and the fish (see Heimpel 1999: 153; Veldhuis 2004: 24–25), but on the other hand she is also related to human society and its urban environment (Heimpel 1999: 154; Veldhuis 2004: 18–24, 26–29). Thus, the relationship between the goddess, the bird, and the environment in this case is elusive, defined by fluidity and harmony, not by rigid borders, and not by conflict.[11]

The bird of the mountains: Anzu

While the marshes and the riverbanks are not geographically and culturally disconnected from the civilized urban life of (southern) Mesopotamia, the mountains rising outside of the river valleys of Mesopotamia were certainly contrasted with this urban life. The mountains are not where the inhabitants of Mesopotamia live; cosmologically they are associated with the netherworld, since the mountains to the east and to the west of Mesopotamia are the places from which and into which the sun rises and descends, marking the points of time in which its journey in the netherworld begins and ends (Heimpel 1986; Steinkeller 2005). This contrast between civilized urban life and the mountains does not imply a binary contrast between a "something" (the populated city) and a "nothing" (the mountains), but rather a continuous tension between two entities. The mountains are perceived as a constant threat, an alternative to urban life, and therefore the relationship between the urban and the mountain areas is that of a constant struggle over power.

Just as the harmonious state of the riverbanks and marshes is divinized and associated with birds (as seen in the case of Nanše discussed above), so also the threatening and competing power of the mountains is divinized and associated with a bird: Anzu (Perdibon 2019: 74–76). While the relationship between Nanše and the bird, a (real) goose, is elusive – the two are at times distinguished, at times likened, and at times (almost) identified – the image of Anzu as a god-bird is clear, and the identification of the god with the bird absolute. Anzu is not a representation of an (anthropomorphic) divinity, but has the form of a bird of prey himself. On the other hand, he is also not a "real" bird. A large bird seen by a human in the mountains was (probably) not considered to be Anzu. Rather, Anzu is a mythological bird, and his activity takes place in the divine realm that is usually concealed from humans and known to them only through stories and texts, through cult, or through ominous messages. Perhaps this remoteness and "otherness" of the mountains is what determines the strictly avian form of the divinity of this natural landscape; an anthropomorphic manifestation of the god may have seemed unnecessary because his habitat is not associated with humans.

Sumerian and Akkadian sources emphasize the power attributed to Anzu by describing his frightening but also majestic features, and his ability to decree fates. Anzu's fierce and powerful image is vividly portrayed in the Sumerian epic Lugalbanda and Anzu (lines 44–49):[12] "When at daybreak the bird stretches himself, when at sunrise Anzu cries out, at his cry the ground quakes in the Lulubi mountains. He has a shark's teeth and an eagle's claws. In terror of him wild bulls run away into the foothills, stags run away into their mountains."

Later in this episode of the epic, Anzu praises himself, emphasizing his majestic and fate-decreeing qualities, when preparing to bless Lugalbanda (lines 99–104): "I am the prince who decides the destiny of rolling rivers ... My father Enlil brought me here. He let me bar the entrance to the mountains as if with a great door. If I fix a fate, who shall alter it? If I but say the word, who shall change it?"

Here, the text makes clear the power of Anzu: he controls the mountains, which are envisioned as a separate realm barred to humans, and has full charge of decreeing fates in this zone (Veldhuis 2004: 30–33, 35–38). As ruler over the mountain area, though, Anzu remains under the command and custody of Enlil. Thus, the power of Anzu, ruling over the mountains, is still

[10] See n. 8 above.

[11] Perhaps this is related to the elusive presence of water birds in the marshes, hiding and appearing in the cane-breaks.

[12] Here and in the following, the translation follows ETCSL; see also Verderame 2021: 17–18.

subordinate to the power of Enlil, who is in charge of the entire universe, but in practice dwells in the urban civilization.

But the clear separation between these two worlds, and the clear subordination of Anzu to Enlil, is not self-evident. Indeed, Anzu turns on Enlil and attempts to rule also the inhabited world, an episode recounted in the Akkadian Anzu myth (Vogelzang 1988; Annus 2001). In this myth Anzu steals the supreme universal power, the Tablet of Destinies, from Enlil, and flees to the mountains, reversing the previous balance of power. Whereas Enlil, dwelling in the urban civilization, had power also over the ruler of the mountains, now Anzu, in the mountains, holds the supreme power, and Enlil is subordinated to him. Eventually, Ninurta, Enlil's son and avenger, goes out to the mountains and fights and subdues Anzu (see Veldhuis 2004: 33–34; Studevent-Hickman 2010; Shehata 2017: 187–189).

Yet Anzu is not wholly excluded from the inhabited lands of the plain. He is associated with Ninĝirsu (Ninurta's equivalent in the city of Ĝirsu) via the epithet of Ninĝirsu's temple Eninnu in Ĝirsu, "the White Anzu," indicating Anzu's presence also in the urban world. This epithet demonstrates the submission of the mountain region to the civilized (and urban) world after the battle between Ninurta and Anzu, but it is also a display and invocation of the power of the mountain region within the civilized urban world, a display and invocation that is connected to conflict and (violent) power relations (Shehata 2017: 185, 193–194).

To sum up, the relationship between the bird Anzu and the mountains is one of identification. The identification between the god and the bird is absolute: the manifestation of the god Anzu is the Anzu bird – Anzu is a divine bird (or a bird-god), and does not have a human form (at least not in texts, and probably not in art either). In addition, the environment of this bird, the mountains, is absolute, separated from and contrasted to the human urban environment. Anzu, therefore, like the mountains in which he dwells, is the "other" in relation to humans and their urban dwellings. Perhaps this alterity explains why he does not have a human manifestation and why he is separated also from the urban divinities. He appears in the city not as part of the regular human-like pantheon, but as an allusion to the subjugation of the mountain forces to the city.

The bird of the city: Enlil as a raven

The city birds that appear most often in Mesopotamian literary descriptions are not very spectacular in appearance. Common city birds are the dove and the raven. Neither species is colorful, and both make noises that differ from the regular chirping usually associated with other (city) birds. In the following I will concentrate on the appearance of the raven in the city according to two Sumerian texts, namely Enlil and Namzitara and a short passage from a Sumerian Balaĝ lament.

The Sumerian composition Enlil and Namzitara is known from a few copies dating to the Old Babylonian period, from Late Bronze Age Emar (in a bilingual version), as well as from unpublished bilingual fragments from Nineveh.[13] It tells the story of Namzitara, a cultic functionary in Nippur, who encounters Enlil in the form of a bird. Enlil decrees his fate to continue his priestly lineage (with its economic benefits) in the temple of Nippur. We are interested here in the first part of the composition (lines 1–18):[14]

> Namzitara passed(?) by Enlil. He (= Enlil) said to him (= Namzitara): "From where (have you come), Namzitara?" "From Enlil's temple. I completed my turn of duty. I was standing (in service; i.e., holding a prebend) to pass (i.e., serve) at the place of the *gudu* priests.[15] I am going to my house. Do not let me stand (here)! My steps are hurrying! Who are you, the person who asks me questions?" "I am Enlil." Enlil turned his face there.[16] After he (= Enlil) turned into a raven, he was calling out. (Namzitara said): "You are not a raven, you are Enlil! Decree my fate!" "I am indeed Enlil, how did you know?" (Namzitara said): "When Enmešara, your uncle, was a captive, and you took the divine kingship (literally: "*Enlil*-ship") away (from him) – (since then the people) say: 'this day, I shall know he is a bird(?)'."[17]

[13] See Civil 1974/1977; Cooper 2017; Cohen 2020; Lämmerhirt 2020 (the last three references also with mention of previous literature). The Nineveh fragments will be published by Enrique Jiménez. Note also the mention of the composition in the Nineveh inventory K.10182+ (Lambert 1989: 95–96).

[14] See the translations, summaries, and interpretations by Civil 1974/1977; Cooper 2017; Lämmerhirt 2020; Cohen 2020: 36–39.

[15] The interpretation follows Cohen 2020: 38–39.

[16] This phrase is usually understood as "changed his appearance (into a raven)," and this may indeed be the sense. But since it is probably not attested elsewhere in this sense (see Lämmerhirt 2020: 398–399), I translated it here literally as a physical turning, i.e., Enlil turned his face away from Namzitara (before reappearing again as a raven in the next line).

[17] Or: "this day, I shall know he is a lord-bird." My reading and interpretation of the last phrase is based on collation of the photograph of A 30218 (3N-T360) (belonging to the same tablet as IM 58427 = 3N-T326; see Lämmerhirt 2020: 384 for references) in CDLI (P274955; see also the photographs of a cast in Alster 2005: pls. 37–38), the only manuscript of the composition that preserves this phrase: u_4-ne(-)en mušen^{I}-nam ga-zu. The phrase was previously read u_4-ne-en-gin$_7$ nam ga-zu (the signs can also be parsed as u_4-ne en-gin$_7$-nam ga-zu, or u_4-ne en-gin$_7$ nam-ga-zu; see Civil 1974/1977: 70; Lämmerhirt 2020: 400). Although the reading of the sign GIN$_7$ was never questioned, the sign on the photograph looks more like ḪU, i.e., mušen (compare in the same tablet, ix:27, 30; see Lämmerhirt 2020: 387), than like GIN$_7$ (compare in the other part of the tablet, IM 58427, viii:22, 37; see Alster 2005: 278 with photograph of cast in pl. 39).

In this text Enlil appears to Namzitara as a raven (probably after appearing to him as a human, see Lämmerhirt 2020: 402–404) within the urban environment, on the way between the temple and Namzitara's house, where indeed it is likely that ravens were often encountered. This encounter is not only visual, but also auditory, since the raven cries out. However, Namzitara identifies the raven as Enlil, alluding to a mythological episode of conflict between Enmešara, the former king of the gods, and Enlil.[18]

In this text, as in the Anzu myth, a bird is related to a conflict and to power and authority (decreeing fates), but here the bird does not represent a subdued alien force. Rather, the raven is a manifestation of Enlil's victory over his enemy. Enmešara is banished to the netherworld and is not admitted into the civilized one, while in the civilized (urban) environment, it is of course Enlil who holds power, and therefore Namzitara asks Enlil to decree his fate. While the tension between the mountain and the urban environment is maintained in the case of Anzu, in the case of Enmešara it is a "zero-sum game;" either Enmešara or Enlil will be the victor, and the defeated god will not be permitted to exercise power under the victor's control. Enlil's combat with Enmešara does not represent an opposition and tension between two environments, urban and mountainous, but between life and death (Enmešara is a prisoner in the netherworld, and therefore entirely separated from the living). While the netherworld, the realm of the dead, is connected to the mountains in ancient Mesopotamian cosmology, still the distinction between life and death, between the netherworld and the living world, must be absolute. Enlil's appearance in the city in the form of a raven declares that indeed the absolute power is now in his hands.

Why was the raven chosen to represent the urban environment, and why is the raven here connected to Enlil?[19] The relationship between Enlil, the raven, and the city does not seem to be the same type of relationship that was seen between Ninurta, Anzu, and the mountains, where the bird is associated with the god as a sign of his control over another environment. It is also not similar to the relationship between Nanše, her goose, and the riverbanks and marshes, all part of a harmonious ecosystem. Rather, the association of Enlil with the raven probably has to do with the nature of Enlil himself: He is indeed the king of the gods, and the king of the universe, but he is not necessarily a benevolent figure in harmony with the world, identifying with his people. On the contrary, as portrayed in the Sumerian lamentation literature, Enlil can rage and destroy his own land for reasons that humans cannot comprehend. He is not in a harmonious relationship with his world. The city, too, is not always a place of harmony. Although Mesopotamian literature often portrays an ideal image of the city (e.g., Uruk in the introduction to the Gilgameš epic), the urban environment is not necessarily a harmonious one. It may be crowded, noisy, and dirty, and it is often the site of quarrels, theft, destruction, conflict, and disease. The raven too is not a bird associated with harmony: it is mostly uncolorful,[20] its cries are not sweet, and unlike many birds that are elusive and difficult to spot, it has a bold presence in the human environment and is hardly afraid of humans. It also attacks other birds, and in addition, it feeds on the city dwellers' food and remains, as well as on the crops of their fields. Moreover, ravens also feed on carcasses, and therefore are also associated with death (an association found in other cultures as well).[21]

Thus, all three elements in the Enlil-city-raven relationship represent an unideal, realistic human urban life, often unspectacular and even tragic, full of problems, unfairness, and quarreling. This is life, for good and for bad, and its noisy characteristics are what distinguishes it from death. But the possibility of death and destruction is always there (and will inevitably be realized), and therefore the raven is a reminder not only of the hardships of life but also of death (specifically, the killing of Enmešara in the netherworld).

Indeed, the raven is also associated with destruction and comes to be a predictor of it according to Mesopotamian laments.[22] Thus, in the eighth section (Kirugu) of an Old Babylonian Sumerian Balaĝ to Enlil, Enlil's destructive command ("Word") is manifest as a raven (Cohen 1988: 377–378, 382: a+33–40):[23]

[18] If my understanding above is correct, this mythological episode is what made Enlil identifiable as a bird (mušen, if my reading is correct); see n. 17 above. In any case, although Cooper (2017: 39–40, 43–44) is definitely correct that Enlil's message about Namzitara's fate is related to the episode in which Enlil became the ruler (and thus the one who decrees fates), this is very unlikely to be a wordplay on u_4 ... ga- (for /uga/, "raven"), two very common syllables which here appear separated from each other. As Yoram Cohen noted (personal communication), the very cry of the raven is a message alluding to the netherworld mythologeme, a perception found also in the Birdcall Text treated below; compare Cohen 2020: 41.

[19] The raven is associated also with other deities in Mesopotamia (see Verderame 2021: 18–19), but here and in other texts it is specifically associated with Enlil. See Veldhuis 2004: 299–301, and Frahm 2009: 150 with references and below.

[20] Although note the association of the Ekur temple with a "white raven" (Frahm 2009: 150).

[21] Note that ravens may also have been identified with Enlil on the basis of their appearance at the summit of buildings, specifically the Ekur temple of Enlil; see Cohen 2020: 41.

[22] Note that in the Babylonian flood story, at least in its first millennium BCE version, the raven predicts the end of the destruction (which was brought by Enlil). For this episode, and the different birds that appear in the different versions and traditions of the flood story and their order of appearance, see George 2003: 514–516; Cavigneaux 2007; Darshan 2016: 510–512; Wasserman 2020: 8–13, 90, 127, 148.

[23] I understand su_{13}-ud in the phrase šà-ab su_{13}-ud ... ak, as the common adjective "remote, unfathomable" (usually written sù or sù-ud) that in Emesal prayer-laments describes Enlil's heart, which is "made" (ak) manifest by the raven. For different opinions and

> "How long? How long?
> Mullil (= Enlil), how long?
> Mullil, lord of the lands, how long?
> Shepherd of the black-headed (people), how long?
> In its (= the city's) midst the raven makes the unfathomable heart (manifest),
> The raven, regarding [the "Word"] of Mullil, makes the unfathomable heart (manifest),
> The honored one *who scattered persons* from the Land,
> Father Mullil *diminishes* his black-headed (people)."

In these lines, the raven, although distinguished from Enlil, makes Enlil manifest. Specifically, the raven makes Enlil's unfathomable and destructive heart manifest. This heart is always concealed from humans; no one can understand the thoughts and decisions that arise in Enlil's heart. His heart and the thoughts in it are the essence of Enlil, which as noted above, is always inaccessible to humans, and therefore exists only in the "divine world." In the "human and natural worlds," one can only experience the consequences of Enlil's heart and thoughts, which are usually destructive according to the Sumerian lament literature. But there is still one decisive moment between the rise of the destructive decision in Enlil's heart and the destruction itself, namely, Enlil's verbal order of destruction, the "Word" (Emesal : e-ne-èĝ) so frequently mentioned in the laments. This "Word" is actually what leads to the destruction, or, from a temporal point of view, predicts it (Gabbay 2014: 21–22, 27–29). The raven, therefore, which makes manifest the unfathomable heart of Enlil, where the destruction was conceived and planned, is also related to the "Word" of Enlil, as mentioned in the sixth line of the passage cited above. Like the "Word," the raven serves as a prediction or message of the coming destruction.

To sum up, the relationship between the raven, the city, and Enlil is not one of identification, submission, or harmony. Rather, as seen in the Balaĝ passage, the raven serves as an ominous message of the god, a predictor of his appearance, a being that although different from the god is in some manner analogical to him (see below). Indeed, even when Enlil appears in the form of a raven in the composition Enlil and Namzitara, his appearance is related to his communication with Namzitara, and through his call he transmits a positive message.[24] Thus, the god-environment-bird relationship in the case of Enlil is more involved than in the cases of Nanše and Anzu discussed above. First, the connection between Enlil and the city is complex: Enlil is the god of the entire universe, but he dwells in the city (in his temple in Nippur). But even the name of his temple, Ekur (é-kur, "House-Mountain"), indicates that he is not in harmony with the city. Indeed, he is not, and according to various sources, especially Sumerian Emesal prayer-laments, Enlil may bring destruction upon his own city and retreat to the mountains.[25] The relationship between the city and birds is complex too. The city is not the "natural" dwelling place of animals, but rather a dwelling place of animals who have some kind of relationship with humans (e.g., eating their leftovers). Therefore, the presence of animals in the city must be related somehow to its human dwellers, and is thus considered an ominous message.[26]

The mythical speech and lamentation of birds

As seen in the case of Enlil and the raven, birdcalls are of divine significance. The raven calls out, thereby delivering the message (which must be deciphered) that he is Enlil in a mythological episode involving the god. This is in keeping with the general Mesopotamian notion of divine manifestation in the "human world," which is often centered not on appearance but on messages, usually in speech but also in writing, as most clearly seen in omens – and in the Emesal lament-prayers, in the destructive "Word" of the gods, especially Enlil – (Gabbay 2016: 260–263). The call of the birds can be a message about the future (as in the Balaĝ lament cited and discussed above), predicting the divine presence, but it can also be a message from the past, alluding to a mythological episode (as in Enlil and Namzitara). In other words, one can see such texts as referring to a reality in which the call of a bird reminds the (human) listeners of the acts of the gods, and thus makes the "divine (mythological) world" present in the "human world."

This "divine world" present in the "human world" can manifest itself, for instance, in the reaction of goddesses to destruction. In Sumerian laments, the goddess is often portrayed as a bird, especially when crying. For this, the texts use the suffix -gin$_7$ (Akkadian: *kīma)*, "like," to compare the cries of the goddess to the sounds of birds – very often doves, whose calls can sound like the sound of sobbing.[27] But the goddess is not only "like" a bird. She is also portrayed as an actual bird, for example, in the first lines of the Sumerian Balaĝ lament-prayer úru ḫul-a-ke$_4$ to the goddess Gula (Cohen 1988: 254–255, 261: 1–2):

interpretations of this phrase, see Kutscher 1975: 79; Cohen 1988: 399; Attinger 2005: 248.

[24] Similarly, in the composition called the Birdcall Text in modern Assyriological scholarship (see below), the cry of the raven, associated with Enlil, is understood as a good omen (*egirrû)* to the dwellers of Nippur (Lambert 1970: 140: 14).

[25] See, e.g., Cohen 1988: 104: a+221.

[26] The general connection between the city and omens, many of them animal omens, is found in the divinatory series Šumma ālu, "If a city."

[27] E.g., "Like (-gin$_7$) a dove in your (= the goddess's) cella," see Cohen 1988: 256, 261: a+28–29.

> She of the destroyed city says: "Oh, my House!"
>
> The bird of the destroyed city says: "Oh, (my House)!"[28]

"She" in the first line of the passage refers to the goddess, but she is portrayed here as a bird (and not just literarily "like a bird"). If we take this portrayal seriously, this may not only refer to the goddess as a bird, but may also refer to a bird as a goddess; specifically, the birds' cries heard in the city (especially in ruined places or cavities in structures, where doves often nest, see Veldhuis 2004: 289) may be the cries of the goddess.[29] Thus, one can speculate that the literary simile "the goddess is a crying bird, the goddess is crying like a bird" likewise implies the reverse: "the bird is like the crying goddess." While in the "textual world" describing divine actions, a bird is used to portray the image of the crying goddess, in the "natural world" known to human beings, where the gods cannot be experienced as they are in the "divine (mythological) world," the call of the bird may allude to the crying goddess.[30]

The most elaborate interest in the voices of birds, and their association with divinity, is found in the Akkadian composition called the Birdcall Text in modern Assyriological scholarship. In this text, known from a few manuscripts of the Neo-Assyrian period from Assur, Nineveh, and Sultantepe (with much variation between the manuscripts), each entry lists a bird and its association (*ša*, "of") with a specific god.[31] This is followed by a description of its call, referring to a mythological episode, or by a divine utterance (sometimes actually known as a citation from a different text) that includes an onomatopoeic element (usually reduplicated) echoing that bird's call. Some of the utterances of the birds are related to the mythological generational combats between the gods, especially Enlil (identified with Marduk) and Enmešara (and other gods identified with him), i.e., the same mythological episode alluded to in the composition Enlil and Namzitara, discussed above.[32] For example (Lambert 1970: 112: 2, 114: 15, 116: 12):

> The rooster is the bird of Enmešara (variant: Nuska); it cries out continuously: "You have sinned against Tutu (= Marduk) (Akkadian: *taḫṭaṭâ ana Tutu*)"

In this line, the rooster's call, its "cock-a-doodle-doo," which probably sounded to the Akkadian ear more like "taḫ-ṭata-ana-tutu," was understood as an address to Enmešara, reminding him that he had sinned against Marduk (and therefore was confined to the netherworld). The rooster's daily cries in the "natural world," mostly integrated with the "human world," are understood to be indications of acts that occurred (and perhaps perpetually occur) in the "divine world," specifically, the "mythological world" of the gods. The rooster's cry, then, reminds humans of divine actions and carries a message regarding the divine presence. When one hears the rooster's "cock-a-doodle-doo" (*taḫṭatâ-ana-tutu)* every morning, he or she also hears a message addressed to Enmešara concerning his misdeeds against Marduk, king of the gods. Thus, through the rooster's call, a manifestation of the "divine world" comes to life in the "natural-human world." This is a message about the "divine world" revealed in the "natural-human world."

However, like most ominous messages in ancient Mesopotamia (and elsewhere as well), these messages from the "divine world" are not self-explanatory. It is not evident that when one hears a rooster calling out, what he or she actually hears is a reminder of the mythological battle with Enmešara. The call needs to be interpreted to yield this message, and this interpretation was performed by scholars, in this case, the scholars who composed and copied the Birdcall Text. Thus, the Birdcall Text is not different from other texts on omens. Just as a natural phenomenon – e.g., a formation in the liver of a sacrificial sheep, the appearance of a snake in a man's house, or a halo around the moon – is considered to convey an ominous message referring to divine decisions – i.e., it is not only the phenomenon itself, but also a manifestation of the "divine world" in the form of a message that can only be deciphered by scholars – so is the call of the bird considered to be more than its sound, namely an ominous message bringing something from the "divine world" into the "natural-human world" that can only be deciphered by scholars.

Other entries in the Birdcall Text serve not only as allusions to mythic episodes, but also to specific texts

[28] Note that the Akkadian translation renders "bird" here as "maiden" (*ardatu)*. Although this is perhaps related to phonetic matters (Cohen 1988: 270), it is also an example of the tendency to "de-animalize" Sumerian descriptions of gods as animals in Akkadian translations; see Maul 1997: 258; Seminara 2002: 250.

[29] Note also the association of the owl with destroyed cities in the BALAG šikinšu text. See Mirelman 2015: 177–178, r.8–9, and 180, note to line 9.

[30] The image of birds is common in laments (Black 1996; Gabbay 2014: 32–33) and may be related to the use of the sign BALAG for birds in the composition BALAG šikinšu (Mirelman 2015: 183–184).

[31] Birds are associated with gods also in the BALAG šikinšu text, which provides descriptions of birds; see Mirelman 2015: 177–178, r.1–9, and 179, note to lines 4–5. Birds are also associated with gods in a section on bird omens in Šumma ālu and in a similar Iṣṣūru šikinšu text; see Stadhouders 2021.

[32] The reference to the Enlil-Enmešara conflict in the Birdcall Text, a text with explanatory characteristics, is in keeping with the many references to this mythological episode in cultic commentaries of the first millennium BCE. See Gabbay 2018: 26–27. In addition, as Yoram Cohen noted (personal communication), since the calls of many birds are heard at dawn, this probably contributes to their association with the netherworld, a time when the sun rises from the netherworld (see Anor and Cohen 2021: 52, and below).

describing those episodes. Such a case is clearly seen in the following line (Lambert 1970: 112: 9–11, 114: 3–4, r.6–7; see Gabbay 2015: 263–264):

> The swallow is the bird of ..., crossing the sea, it calls out continuously: "Your emblem is a dragon from whose mouth poison (var. blood) drips (bi-iz-bi-iz)."

In this line, the bird's call, which sounded like *biz-biz*, relates to the god's mythical emblem in the form of a poison-spitting dragon. But this description is in itself a citation from a Sumerian prayer to Nabû. The entry in the Birdcall Text refers not only to the mythic emblem but to its textual description. Above, a comparison was drawn between the Birdcall Text and omens, as both convey a message given by the divine in the human and natural realms. In this example, this comparison can be taken one step further, into the "textual world." The interpretation of omens in ancient Mesopotamia was deeply textual. For example, reports of Babylonian and Assyrian scholars to the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal during the seventh century BCE record how they interpreted astral ominous phenomena by matching them with specific texts (Hunger 1992). In addition, descriptions of the liver as the "tablet of the gods," or of celestial signs as the "writing on the sky," as well as actual omens that refer to signs in the form of cuneiform characters on the liver or on the human body (Frahm 2010), all attest to the textual nature of divination, closely related with the scholarly milieu, whose main activity had to do with the writing, study, and interpretation of texts. Similarly, in the Birdcall Text the sounds made by birds are not only interpreted as divine messages, but they are also matched with specific texts.

To sum up, the description of the sounds made by birds in the Birdcall Text, as well as in the Sumerian tale of Enlil and Namzitara, emphasizes that the relationship between birds and gods is centered around ominous messages. These messages are in turn related to texts that are the province of scholars, a social group that deals with texts in the context of scholarship and of divination.

The relationship between the birds and the gods is thus not detached from another element: humans. The basis of the relationship between birds and gods is their communication with humans: the divine message is conveyed in the human world through birds.

In the following paragraph, I will take this relationship one step further, although admittedly, this may be quite speculative. In the second example from the Birdcall Text presented above, the allusion to the divine emblem, a poison-spitting dragon, referred not simply to a literary text, but to a cultic prayer. Thus, the line from this prayer is not only a linguistic utterance associated with humans, but also a liturgical musical utterance produced by birds. If so, one may perhaps speculate that not only is the mythology of the gods brought into the "natural and human world" through birdcalls, but also the cult directed to the gods is transferred from the realm of humans to the birds. The birds, like humans, utter prayers (or at least lines from prayers) mentioning mythical scenes. Subsequently, cult itself, at least the liturgy sung or recited in cult, is not only a human activity, but one of nature too, carried out by birds.[33] This speculation may seem a bit less fanciful when recalling that the textual context of the Birdcall Text, like much of Mesopotamian scholarship in the first millennium BCE, was in the domain of scholars who were also cultic practitioners and functionaries, and as such they did not deal only with the textual form of divination and scholarship, but were also deeply involved in cult and the performance of texts in it.

The relationship between gods and birds

As seen above, the relationship between gods and birds is not detached from the relationship between humans (and their culture) and nature, a relationship that is constructed in different forms in different societies (Descola 2013).

The nature-culture relationship that is usually associated with the religion of ancient urban civilizations (such as ancient Mesopotamia) is mostly what Descola (2013: 201–231) calls analogism: Nature and the human world are distinct, both in culture and in material or form, but there is an analogical connection between them. An event or phenomenon in nature may serve as an analogy (and thus also as a prediction) of an event that occurs (or will occur) in human society. This is most evident in divination and in magic, very dominant in Mesopotamian religion (as it is also in other societies), where a "natural" phenomenon may signify a human event or may be incorporated into a treatment for a human condition on the basis of an analogy (Rochberg 2016: 156–163).

Indeed, when looking at the case of the birds, both the birds in the urban environment noted above as well as the birds in the Birdcall Text fit this model. The raven that appears in the city in the lament makes manifest the destructive command of Enlil, which will have a disastrous effect on humans. Thus, the raven serves here as a sign, a "natural" phenomenon that makes manifest the divine in the "human world" in the form of a message. This could be seen in a more complex

[33] This may also be in keeping with representations in Ancient Near Eastern art of animals playing (cultic) musical instruments. See Mirelman 2014.

way also in the composition Enlil and Namzitara. Enlil is on the one hand manifest as an actual bird, yet he is still distinct from it; in the words of Namzitara: "You are not a raven, you are Enlil."[34] In addition, Enlil appears as a bird on this occasion in order to convey a specific message, the fate of Namzitara. This, in turn, is connected to the mythological episode related to his appearance as a bird and which resulted in his ability to decree fates. Thus, an analogy is drawn between Enlil's appearance (and call) as a raven and the future fate of Namzitara. Indeed, it is probably not a coincidence that the message conveyed by the bird has to do with the netherworld. The netherworld, where the sun dwells before it rises in our own world, is also the place where the future is planned, and therefore the sun is extremely significant for divination (Steinkeller 2005). Birds can fly to heaven, and since they can fly to the horizons, where the sun rises from and descends into the netherworld, they also have access to the netherworld, the place where the future is determined, and can carry a message from there (Steinkeller 2005: 34–37; Anor and Cohen 2021: 52–53).

But not all god-bird identifications in Mesopotamia fit the model of analogy. What is Anzu, for instance? On the one hand, Anzu is an actual bird and does not manifest himself in any other form, and thus he is a bird that acts like a human (or like a god in anthropomorphic form), as in animistic religions (compare Perdibon 2019: 175–176).[35] On the other hand, this is not a case of animism in which a bird seen in nature is understood as a god. Only this specific bird of the mountains is a god, and other birds of the mountains do not act like persons. It is only Anzu, i.e., a specific god that has the physical form of a bird but also the behavioral characteristics of a human.

A better demonstration of the animistic model comes from the Birdcall Text again, since it interprets the call of birds as actually being (human) language (i.e., related culturally to humans, see Descola 2013: 129–143). Moreover, some of this language actually consists of citations from texts that had a cultic existence, implying perhaps that the birds not only speak human utterances, but also address the gods in the same way that humans do. They have cult, and say prayers, thus culturally behaving as humans.

The perception that birds are associated with gods is not a speculation on the essence of birds (or gods). Rather it derives from encounters between humans, birds, and gods, whether in nature, in ritual, in the temple, or in the text. These encounters attest to the relationships between the three, and therefore the calls of birds also have implications, whether as ominous messages, as allusions to myths, or as participation in liturgy. As observed by Bird-David (1999), the animistic perception of nature lies not in the objectification of natural elements, nor in their meaning, but rather in what they do in relation to others. Thus, a stone or a tree is not associated with a god or a spirit simply by being a stone or a tree, but rather by the way in which it interacts with others, especially humans. Similarly, although not (entirely) animistic, the association of birds with divinities in ancient Mesopotamia was not necessarily perceived as related to the essence of the bird, but to the way it interacts with its specific environment and with the humans around it.[36]

Excursus: Two parallels from Jewish tradition

In the following, I would like to discuss two cases from Jewish tradition that relate birds to God and that share some similarities with the Mesopotamian cases presented above.

The first case parallels the Mesopotamian Birdcall Text, where elements of nature, specifically birds, pronounce divine utterances that are otherwise known from texts. The Hebrew composition Perek Shirah ("Chapter of Song") is known from the Middle Ages but probably originated earlier, perhaps sometime during the first centuries CE.[37] The different manuscripts of the composition contain many variants, and a critical assessment of the textual transmission and tradition of the text is therefore very difficult. The text contains praises of God – mostly in the form of biblical citations, predominantly from the Psalms – uttered by the different natural elements of the world, such as heaven and earth, celestial bodies, and various trees, plants, fruits, and animals. Among the animals is a large group that includes about twenty types of birds. Some of the natural elements praise God by reciting biblical verses that refer to their very existence and creation,[38] and some utter verses that are connected in some way to their specific characteristics. In the case of the birds, many of their utterances refer to their calls, which are portrayed in verses – again, mostly from the Psalms – as music and singing, as, for instance, in the following entries (Beit-Arie 1966: vol. 2, 67–69):

[34] This distinction indicates that we are not dealing with an animistic understanding of birds here.

[35] For "animism" in Mesopotamian religion, see Perdibon 2019 (note the useful summary of current approaches in anthropology to the subjects of nature and animism in pp. 31–42).

[36] For the way in which the divine is given meaning only by its relationship to the human who perceives it, see Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015: 5–6.

[37] The following summary is based on Beit-Arie 1966, vol. 1, and the additions and corrections in Beit-Arie 2013. The parallel is cited here only as an example of similar phenomena and not as evidence of connections between the Mesopotamian and Jewish traditions. For other examples of elements in nature, including animals, praising the gods in human language, see Beit-Arie 1966, vol. 1, 74–90; Beit-Arie 2013: 14–17.

[38] Such an image is found already in the Bible itself. See, e.g., Psalms 19:2: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

> The crane (?) – what does it say? "Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre (Psalms 33:2)."
>
> The goose(?) – what does it say? "Sing to him, sing praise to him, tell of all his wonderful acts (Psalms 105:2)."
>
> The raven – what does it say? "A voice of one calling, in the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the desert, a highway for our God (Isaiah 4:3)."

In each of these entries, a bird calls out a biblical verse that contains a reference to calling, singing, or music-making praising God, associated with its own call. This call is interpreted as an utterance recorded in a biblical verse. Thus, as in the ancient Mesopotamian case, the birds' calls are interpreted as (human) linguistic utterances that are tied to a specific text. The birds' call is a way in which the biblical text, a divine text, is manifest in the world, not only in the "human world," but in the "natural world" as well. The emphasis on Psalms, a book associated with liturgy, also indicates, as was speculated above regarding the Birdcall Text, that not only are the birds' calls associated with linguistic human utterances known from texts, but these utterances also have the same performative liturgical role as in the "human world." The bird that is calling is actually praising God in the same way in which humans praise God, namely through liturgies that include biblical verses, especially from the Psalms. Interestingly, the composition Perek Shirah also had (and still has) a liturgical use (Beit-Arie 1966: vol. 1, 40–45), and through that use the liturgical praise offered by nature, specifically by birds – which in itself is identified with biblical liturgical praise (in the language of humans) – is again combined with human liturgical praise.

The second parallel relates to the image of the bird as lamenting the destroyed city, and the ambiguity regarding this bird, namely, whether the lamenting divinity is acting like a bird, or whether the bird can be considered as an allusion to the lamenting deity, as discussed above regarding this image in Sumerian laments. The following story is found in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Berakhot 3:1):

> Rabbi Yossi said: I was once walking along the way, and I entered into a ruin among one of the ruins of (the destroyed) Jerusalem to pray. Elijah (the prophet) of blessed memory came and watched the entrance for me until I completed my prayer. After I completed my prayer he said to me: … "My son, what voice did you hear in this ruin?" And I told him: "I heard a (divine) voice (Hebrew: *bat qôl*) moaning like a dove and saying: 'Woe upon the sons, on account of whose sins I destroyed my house and burnt my temple and exiled them among the nations!'." And he (= Elijah) said to me: "By your life and by the life of your head! Not only in this hour does it (= this voice) say this, but three times each and every day it says this! And furthermore, when (the members of) Israel enter synagogues and academies and respond (in prayer in response to the mention of the divine name): 'May his (= God's) great name be blessed,' the Holy One, blessed be he, shakes his head and says: 'Satisfied is the king who is thus praised in his house! (But) what is there for the father who exiled his children? And woe upon the sons who were exiled from their father's table!'."

In this story, Rabbi Yossi tells Elijah, who has miraculously manifested himself to him, that he heard a voice moaning like a dove in the ruin in which he prayed. This description is grounded in reality, since doves dwell and nest in ruins, and one entering a ruin is very likely to hear doves moaning. But the dove-like moaning heard in the ruin was also a lament in human language: "Woe upon the sons …" As in the case of the ancient Mesopotamian image of the lamenting goddess in the form of a bird, which could be seen as a simile for the goddess's cry, on the one hand, but perhaps as a manifestation of her lament in nature, on the other hand, so may the image of the divine voice sounding like a dove in the Rabbinic story perhaps be interpreted in both ways: It is God, literarily portrayed as a moaning dove, crying over his people, but because the voice is based on the actual moaning of doves in ruins, one may speculate that the voice in the ruins can also be interpreted as the moaning doves alluding to God's lament. In addition, the moaning of doves, which is identified with human lamentation, is associated with prayer, and specifically with the three daily prayers in Jewish liturgy. As in the parallel from Perek Shirah cited above, and the earlier speculation regarding the Birdcall Text, the calls of the birds are interpreted as textual utterances known from liturgy, and thus nature, specifically birds, joins humans in liturgy, by uttering the same texts in their own voice. In the Rabbinic story, too, one may perhaps interpret the moaning dove not only as the lamenting God, but also as a natural participant in liturgy, together with humans.

Abbreviations used

CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, viewed 9 February 2022, <https://cdli.ucla.edu/>.
ETCSL	The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, viewed 9 February 2022, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/>.

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Chapter 34:
For whom the bell tolls:
Horse harnesses at Megiddo and beyond

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Abstract. Up to now, not one object from Megiddo that could be associated with the site's renowned stables or with horses had been identified. A previously neglected small bronze bell unearthed by the Oriental Institute expedition to the site has now changed this strange state of affairs. Bronze bells are known from Salamis in Cyprus, Nimrud and other sites in Assyria, Urartu, and Hasanlu in northwestern Iran. These small bells should be associated with horse harnesses, as indicated by the contexts of the ca. 80 bells from Nimrud, ca. 40 bells from Hasanlu and two bells from Salamis. Their function is clearly demonstrated by Neo-Assyrian and Urartian iconography, in which horses are depicted with bells suspended from their necks.

Keywords: bronze bell, horse harness, Megiddo stables, Salamis, Nimrud, Assurbanipal, royal lion hunt, Urartu, Hasanlu.

Introduction

In this article, dedicated to Tallay Ornan, I present a previously neglected small bronze bell uncovered in the Iron Age II levels of Megiddo by the Oriental Institute expedition. In Israel and the Levant, bells are a rare find and have received little attention, but in other regions of the Near East they have been found in larger numbers (Calmeyer 1969). The typology of bells has been discussed by scholars in relation to bells in archaic and classical Greece (Villing 2002), Mesopotamia (Curtis 2013: 97–100, pls. LXXVI–LXXVII), and the Caucasus, Iran and Urartu (Castelluccia and Dan 2014). From the detailed typologies presented by these scholars, I will mention here four bell types, one of them relevant to Megiddo (Figure 1):

1. *Cylindrical/conical bell*: Bells with a cylindrical or conical body. The slightly conical Megiddo bell belongs to this group. It is similar to Type 1 bells uncovered in the Assyrian city of Nimrud, which are discussed below. Petrie presents similar bells from Egypt, attached to bracelets found in child burials dating from the Roman to the Coptic era (Petrie 1914: pl. XV:124a–b; and 1927: 24, pl. XVIII:33–37). These late Egyptian bells, however, are not relevant to the Megiddo bell.
2. *Urartian bell*: Bells with a cylindrical or conical body, and squares/rectangular window-like openings. This is the distinctive type of Urartian bells (Muscarella 1978; Castelluccia and Dan 2019), and is not known in the Levant.
3. *"Open-cage" bell*: Rounded bells, their lower part perforated by long, narrow openings, giving them the appearance of birds' cages. This type was found in large numbers at Hasanlu (Winter 1980: 4; Castelluccia and Dan 2019: 190), and is not known in the Levant.
4. *Hemispherical bell:* Shallow, rounded bells, known in our area from Samaria, Yavneh Yam and Khirbet Qeiyafa. Since this type dates from the Hellenistic era, it is beyond the scope of our study.

The Megiddo bell

The bell uncovered by the Oriental Institute was described as "bronze bell, pierced, with iron pin to hold clapper, probably intrusive" (Lamon and Shipton 1939: pl. 77:13). The bell is ca. 3 cm wide and 6 cm high. It has a slightly conical body and a large, rounded loop. Two knobs are located on its upper body, one on each side, a feature known to me from only one other bell uncovered in the Near East – at Nineveh (Figure 2). These knobs may be remnants of the casting process.

The bell was uncovered in Locus 310 of Square Q10, a locus ascribed to Stratum IV and generally dated to the 9th or 8th century BCE. Locus 310 is a lime floor situated outside Palace 1723, east of Gate 1567 (Figures 2: 1, 3; Lamon and Shipton 1939: 28, figs. 34, 122–123). The report does not explain why the excavators considered the bell to be intrusive in Stratum IV, but they may have thought that it was an Assyrian bell originating in the Assyrian city of Stratum III.

The current location of the object is unknown. It is not registered in the collections of the British Mandate Department of Antiquities at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, where some objects from these excavations are kept (Alegre Savariego, keeper of the Rockefeller Museum, personal communication). Similarly, the

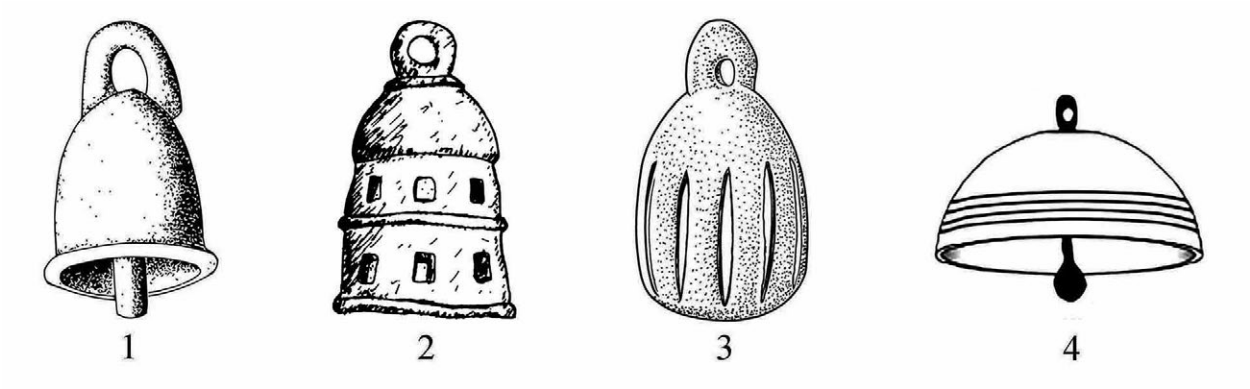

Figure 1. The four bell types mentioned in the text.

object is not registered in the collections of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (Susan Allison, Associate Registrar, Oriental Institute Museum, personal communication).

Bells, horses and chariots at Salamis

Two bells resembling the bell from Megiddo were found at Salamis in Cyprus (Figure 4: 1–2). The royal cemetery excavated at the site yielded finds that included horses and chariots. In the richest burial (Tomb 79), two bronze bells were found in association with Chariot B (Karageorghis 1973: 82–83, map 5). Bell 142 measured 8.5 cm high and its iron clapper was still preserved (Karageorghis 1973: 20, pls. LXXX:142, CCLIV:142). The second bell is 9.2 cm high (Karageorghis 1973: 22, pls. LXXX:163, CCLIV:163). These two bells are similar to the Megiddo bell but are 2–3 cm higher. The archaeological context at Salamis provides a clear connection between bells and horses. Karageorghis mentioned that a strap typical of horse harnesses "was found at Idalion together with bells" (1973: 83). Two bells were indeed published from Idalion (Gjerstad 1948: fig. 26: 22–23), but I could not find a description of their context. In any case, however, they differ from the bells from Salamis presented here.

Assyrian bells: Objects and iconography

Cylindrical and conical bells are well known from excavations at the Neo-Assyrian sites of Nimrud, Khorsabad and Sharif Khan (Curtis 2013: pls. LXXVI–LXXVII). The best assemblage came from Room AB of the Northwest Palace of Nimrud. Here two large bronze cauldrons were found with various items of horse harness, including a large number of small bronze bells with iron clappers (Figure 4: 3–6; Layard 1853: 149–152). The exact number of bells is unclear: Layard's estimate was "about eighty bells", Barnett and Falkner (1962: 24, no. 6) mentioned 92 bells, while Curtis (2013: 97) mentioned 80. In any case, the Nimrud finds clearly point to a strong association of bells with horses.

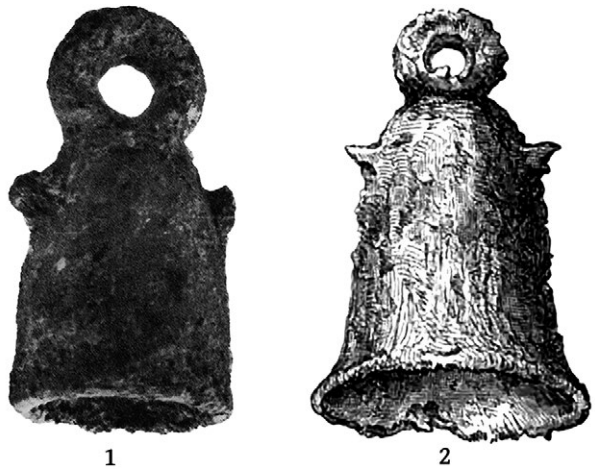

Figure 2. Bronze bells with two small knobs in their upper part: 1. Megiddo (Lamon and Shipton 1939: pl. 77:13), 2. Nineveh (de Saint-Martin 1863: 331).

Layard indicated that the bells varied in size: "The largest are 8.3 cm high and 5.7 cm in diameter, the smallest 4.4 cm high and 3.2 cm in diameter" (Layard 1853: 150, sizes originally given in inches).

Today, 74 of the bells unearthed by Layard are kept in the British Museum (Curtis 2013: 97). Curtis classified the entire collection into nine categories, based on the body shape and the handle type (Curtis 2013: 97–100, pls. LXXVI–LXXVII). The bells from Layard's excavations belong to Types 1–4. The bell from Megiddo is similar to Curtis's Type 1, but differs in the two small knobs in its upper part. However, one similar bell, with two small knobs in its upper part, was published in the early days of research, apparently from Nineveh (Figure 2: 2, de Saint-Martin 1863: 331).

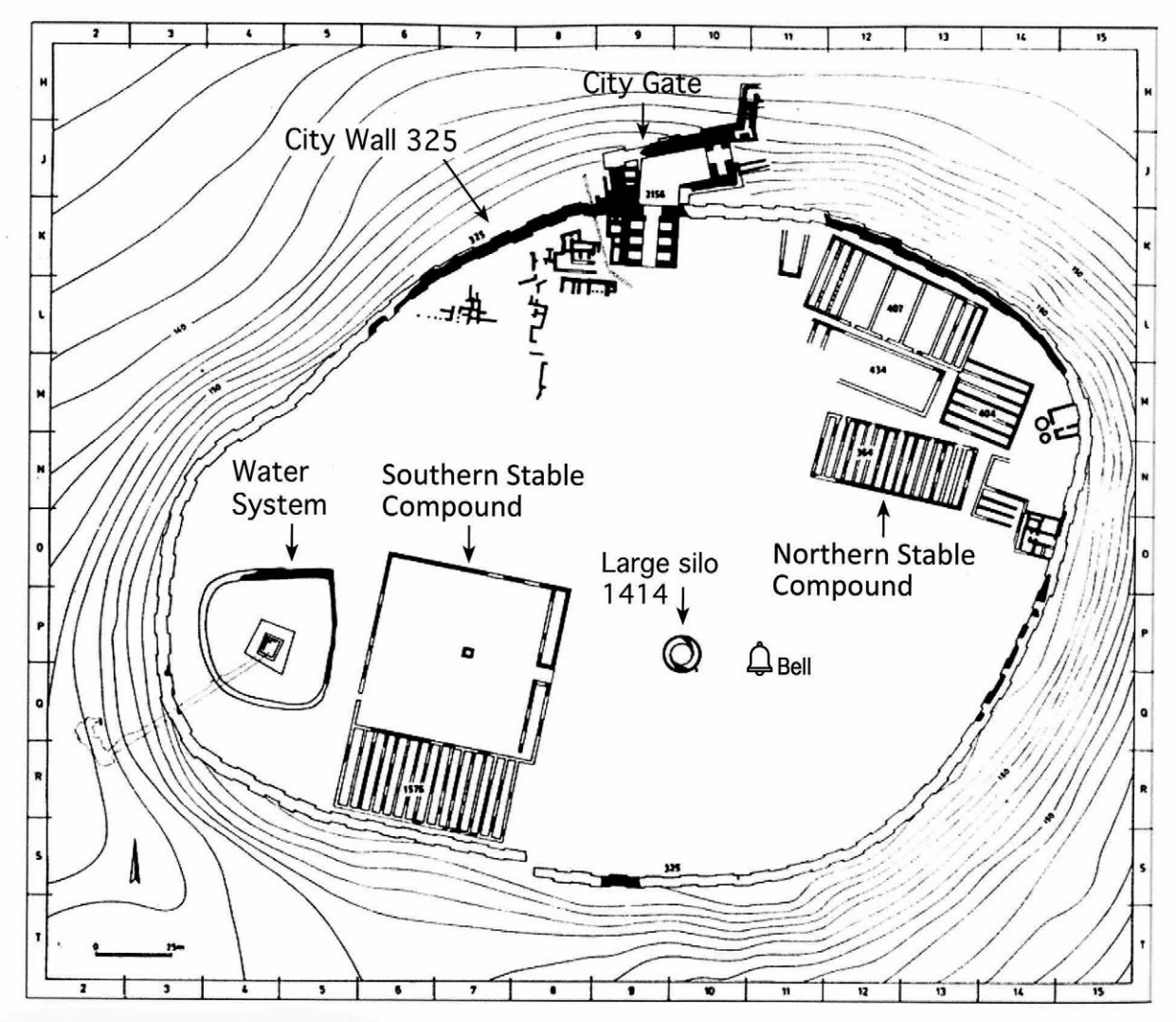

Figure 3. The Iron Age city of Megiddo with the stables, Silo 1414 and the find spot of the bell (based on Ussishkin 2018: fig. 18:1).

Depictions of horses are quite common on Neo-Assyrian reliefs of the 9th to 7th century BCE. Bells, however, are shown only on reliefs dating from the 8th and the 7th centuries BCE. In the various older publications of depictions of Assyrian horses, the original drawings or black and white photographs do not enable close examination of the details (Meissner and Opitz 1940; Barnett and Falkner 1962; Barnett 1976; Barnett *et al.* 1998). Fortunately, this is no longer the case, thanks to high-resolution color photographs uploaded by individual people on the internet. Four such photographs are presented here in figures 6–9.

The earliest example is a bell depicted on a relief from the Southwest Palace of Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 BCE). Here two Assyrian horsemen are pursuing a horseman, whose headdress, clothes and horse trappings are not Assyrian (Figure 5; Barnett and Falkner 1962: 24, pls. LXIV–LXV). Barnett and Falkner suggested that this might be an Urartian warrior. The foreigner's horse has a large bell suspended from its neck. It is interesting that Urartian depictions dated more or less to the same era also show a large bell suspended from the horse's neck (Özgen 1983: figs. 10, 12; for a more detailed discussion, see below).

Seven bells can clearly be identified on reliefs uncovered in the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad (722–705 BCE). Another 78 bells are known from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh (705–681 BCE). In all these depictions one large bell is suspended from the neck of the horse (Table 1; Albenda 1986; Barnett *et al.* 1998).

The other Assyrian depictions of horses with bells come from the famous royal lion hunt scenes of Assurbanipal (669–631 BCE). Here I counted 76 bells, summarized in Table 2. Since the bells on the other side of the horses are invisible, as are bells hidden by a lion or a spear, the

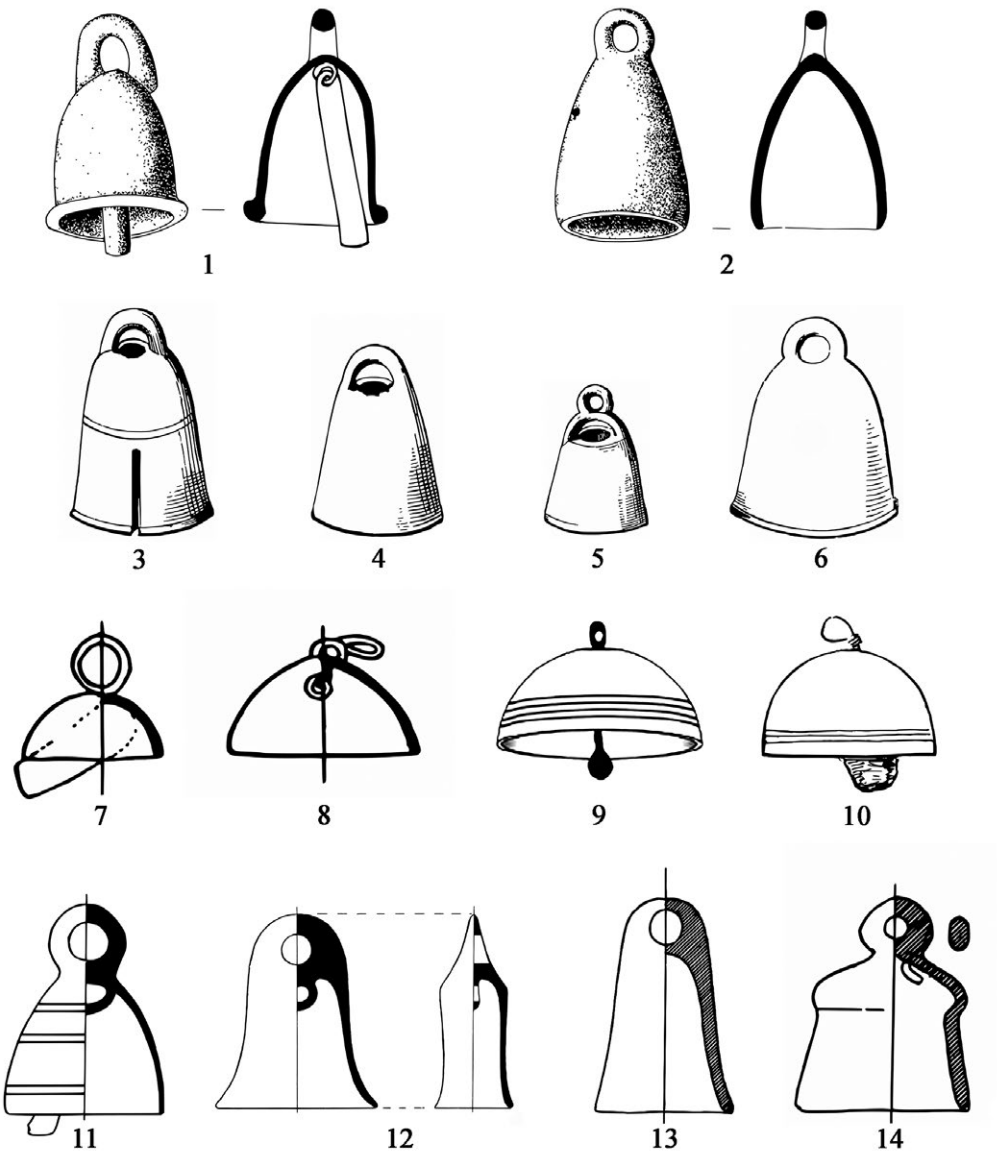

Figure 4. Bronze bells from various excavations: 1–2. Salamis (Karageorghis 1973: pl. CCLIV:142, 163); 3–6. Nineveh (Layard 1853: 150); 7–8, 13–14. Samaria (Reisner *et al.* 1924: pl. 235); 9. Yavneh Yam (Ashkenazi and Fantalkin 2019: fig. 4:e); 10. Al-Mina (Woolley 1938: 165, fig. 25:MNN34); 11–12. Beth Shean (FitzGerald 1931: pl. XXXVIII:2, 5).

total number of bells worn by the horses in the scene would have been over 150. The bells are organized in four different arrangements on the neck of the horse:

1. One large bell in front (Figure 6).
2. One large bell in front with an additional side strap of six to eight smaller bells. The side bells are organized in groups of two or three along the neck (Figure 7).
3. One large bell in front with an additional two side straps of smaller bells. The side bells are organized in groups of two or three along the neck (Figure 8). When both sides of the horse are considered, about 16–20 bells were hung on the neck.
4. A set of three bells, a large one in the centre, and two smaller ones suspended in front (Figure 9). An additional side strap includes two bells. This arrangement appears only on the horses of the king's chariot. When both sides of the animals are taken into account, there were seven bells per horse. As the royal chariot was pulled by four horses, there were 28 bells.

Close examination of how the Assyrians used bells to embellish horses indicates that in most cases (56 out of 76) they were not associated with combat. Most of the horses adorned with bells were participating in the so-called royal lion hunt. They were part of the scenery of the show, used to impress the local population who had

Table 1. Horses with a single bell depicted in Assyrian reliefs from the palaces of Sargon II and Sennacherib.

King	Horses/ Bells	Reference
Sargon II	1	Albenda 1986, pl. 31
Sargon II	3	Albenda 1986: pl. 32
Sargon II	2	Albenda 1986: pl. 33
Sargon II	1	Albenda 1986: pl. 34
Sennacherib	6	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 73–74, slabs 87–89
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 126, slab 184b (detail)
Sennacherib	7	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 140, slab 201a
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 148, slab 221c (detail, right)
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 184, slab 252
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 186, slab 264
Sennacherib	3	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 190, slab 272a
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 190, slab 272b
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 229, slab 313a
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 260, slabs 350a, 351a
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 277, 280, 285, slab 369c
Sennacherib	4	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 278, 281, 285; slab 370
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 291, 294, slab 382b (detail)
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 294, slab 383b
Sennacherib	5	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 287, slabs 384–385
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 315, slab 392
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 315, slab 394
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 316, slab 399
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 320, slab 417
Sennacherib	5	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 342, slabs 435–436; Ussishkin 1982: 88–90.
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 346, slab 437a
Sennacherib	3	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 364, slab 450a
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 366, slab 456a
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 377, slab 483a
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 380, slab 487
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 381, slab 488
Sennacherib	3	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 386, slab 492
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 389, slab 496
Sennacherib	3	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 396, slab 508
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 400, slab 513
Sennacherib	3	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 401, slab 514
Sennacherib	2	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pls. 458–459, slab 628
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 470, slab 651
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 506, slab 700
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 507, slab 702
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 510, slab 705
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 510, slab 706
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 510, slab 707
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 510, slab 710
Sennacherib	1	Barnett *et al.* 1998: pl. 510, slab 711

gathered to see the lions (Barnett 1976: pl. VI; Weissert 1997). In this pseudo-military parade, the bells provided the musical aspect.

The connection between horses and bells from excavations on the one hand and horses and bells in Assyrian reliefs on the other was already pointed out by Layard (1853: 152). He also referred to a mention of horse bells in the biblical text (Zech 14:20), although we should note that this common interpretation of the Hebrew term used in the verse is not universally accepted (Conrad 1999: 197; Wolters 2014: 471–473). Since then, the connection between excavated bells and bells depicted in Assyrian reliefs has been discussed by many scholars (Littauer and Crouwel 1979: 127; Winter 1980: fig. 14; de Schauensee and Dyson 1983; Crouwel 2002: 164; Villing 2002: fig. 42; Curtis 2013: 98–99).

Urartian bells: Objects and iconography

Bells with window-like openings are typical of Urartu and have been found as far west as Samos in Greece (Muscarella 1978). Their connection with horse harnesses becomes clear thanks to the finds in the excavations of Hasanlu (Muscarella 1978; Winter 1980: 4; Dyson and Muscarella 1989: 18; Castelluccia and Dan 2019: 190) discussed in detail below. Dyson and Muscarella (1989: 18) note that bells are known in

Table 2. Bells depicted on horses in the royal lion hunt of Assurbanipal III (Meissner and Opitz 1940; Barnett 1976). Due to the state of preservation, the number of bells was not always clear.

Room/Slab	Horses with bell(s), arrangement	Bells	Total
Room C			
5–6	Two horses, Arr. 4	5+5	10
13–15	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
15–17	Three horses, Arr. 1	1+1+1	3
23	One horse, Arr. 2	4	4
26–27	Two horses, Arr. 1	1+1	2
20–21	One horse, Arr. 2	3	3
Room M			
12–13	One horse, Arr. 2?	3	3
Room S			
7	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
9	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
12	Four horses, Arr. 2+1	4+1+1+1	7
13	Four horses, Arr. 3+2+1	9+3+10+1	23
14	Three horses, Arr. 1	1+1+1	3
15 (after Meissner and Opitz 1940)	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
16	Two horses, Arr. 1	1+1	2
Room S1			
Slab A	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
Room R			
8–9 (after Meissner and Opitz 1940)	Two horses, Arr. 1	1+1	2
Rooms V, V1/T1			
A, B	Three horses, Arr. 1	1+1+1	3
E (Louvre)	Two horses, Arr. 1	1+1	2
A (Louvre)	Three horses, Arr. 1	1+1+1	3
VA 961 (Berlin)	One horse, Arr. 1	1	1
Total			**76**

Urartu in the reign of Menua in the late 9th–early 8th century BCE, at Hasanlu in the late 9th century BCE, and in Assyria (Figure 1:2) in the 8th century BCE.

Detailed studies have been dedicated to Urartian chariots, based on iconographic evidence (Özgen 1983) and archaeological data (Özgen 1984). Three bell types are known from various Urartian sites (Özgen 1984: 109–111, pl. 147, figs. 34–36). The subject of Urartian bells has been recently summarized by Castelluccia and Dan (2019: 190, fig. 5):

> "Metal bells are generally associated with horse harnesses. Neo-Assyrian orthostates show these objects fixed to the harness under the horse's jaw or on the neck. Metal bells can be divided into two main categories: the first is that of so-called 'open-cage', 'bird-cage' or 'rattle' bells. These are small, mostly just a couple of centimeters in height, and globular ... The second group consists of the 'closed' type bells. These are conical or polygonal in shape, with an opening at the bottom and an iron clapper inside."

In my view, however, the open bells should be subdivided into two groups, the Urartian bells with window-like openings and the open-cage type which was found mainly in Hasanlu (Figure 1: 2–3). Despite the very wide distribution of bells with openings, from Samos to Hasanlu, it has not yet been found in the Levant.

Urartian depictions show one large bell suspended from the neck of the warhorse (Figure 10; Özgen 1983: figs. 10, 12, and 1984: 154, no. 49). The Assyrian depiction from Tiglath-Pileser III's palace mentioned above shows a non-Assyrian warrior on a horse bearing one large bell, unlike the depiction of several bells on each horse in Assyrian reliefs (Barnett and Falkner 1962: 24, pls. LXIV–LXV). The bell is suspended from the lower part of this horse's neck, while on the Assyrian horses the bells are suspended from the upper part of the neck. Barnett and Falkner suggested that the foreign horseman might be an Urartian. However, the finds from Hasanlu, discussed in the next section, complicate the picture, as some 40 rather small bells were found together there. It is possible that the Urartian depictions of horses with one large bell, which appear on small bronze objects, are schematic representations. The large-scale Assyrian reliefs, however, had ample space for a more detailed picture of the horse's harness, and so this may not be an Urartian horseman after all.

Bells at Hasanlu

Another site with a significant presence of bells is Hasanlu in northwestern Iran. In Level IV an impressive breastplate was found together with some 40 bells, all associated with horse harnesses (Winter 1980: 4, fig.

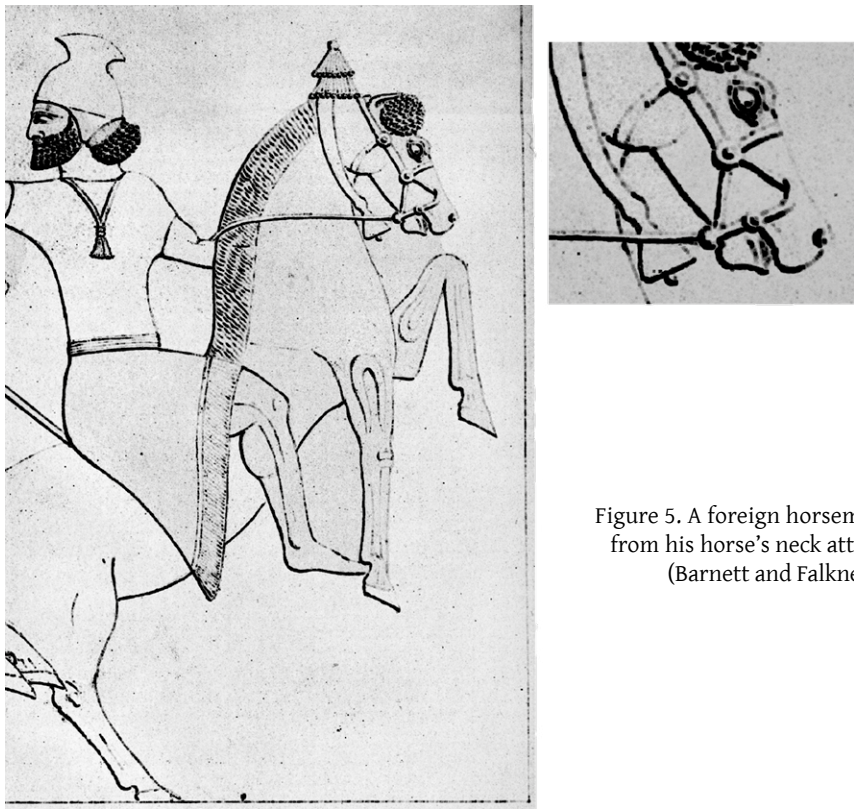

Figure 5. A foreign horseman with one large bell suspended from his horse's neck attacked by two Assyrian horsemen (Barnett and Falkner 1962: 24, pls. LXIV–LXV).

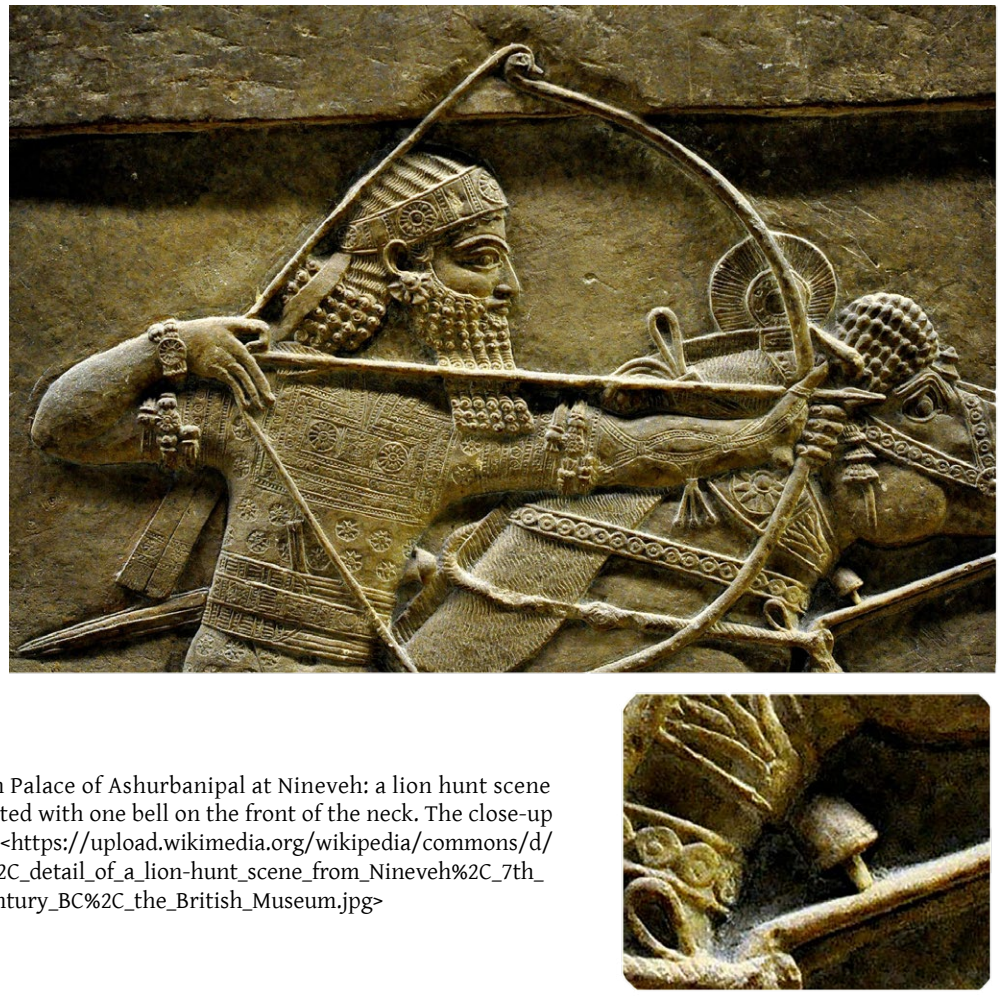

Figure 6. The North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh: a lion hunt scene with a horse decorated with one bell on the front of the neck. The close-up emphasizes the bell <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/Ashurbanipal%2C_detail_of_a_lion-hunt_scene_from_Nineveh%2C_7th_century_BC%2C_the_British_Museum.jpg>

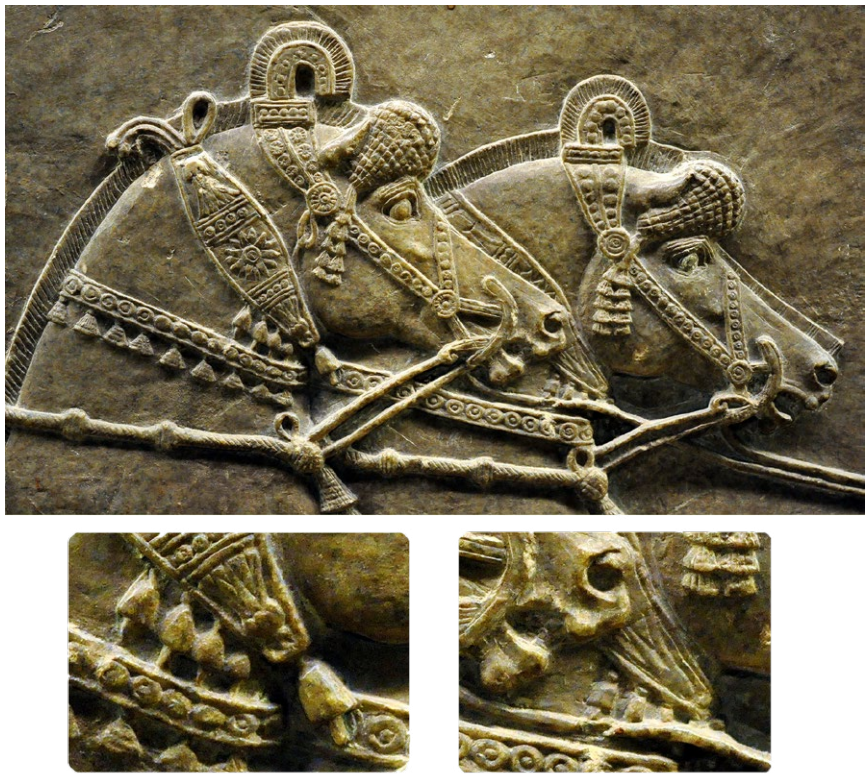

Figure 7. The North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh: a lion hunt scene with a horse decorated with one large bell on the front of the neck and an additional side strap with smaller bells. The close-up emphasizes the smaller bells <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/Assyrian_horses.jpg>

Figure 8. The North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh: a lion hunt scene with a horse decorated with one large bell on the front of the neck and two additional side straps with smaller bells. The close-up emphasizes the smaller bells <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion_Hunt_of_Ashurbanipal#/media/File:Assyrian_king_Ashurbanipal_on_his_horse_thrusting_a_spear_onto_a_lion%E2%80%99s_head._Alabaster_bas-relief_from_Nineveh,_dating_back_to_645-635_BCE_and_is_currently_housed_in_the_British_Museum,_London.jpg>

Figure 9. The North Palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh: a lion hunt scene with a horse decorated with three bells, one large and two smaller, on the front of the neck. An additional side strap holds smaller bells. The close-up emphasizes the bells <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Assyrian_horse.jpg>

15; de Schauensee and Dyson 1983). A large number of horses were also depicted on ivories uncovered at the site, but without bells (Muscarella 1980: 162).

All the bells uncovered at Hasanlu are made from bronze and are of the "open-cage" type (Figure 1:3). These are neither typical Urartian bells, nor typical Assyrian ones. The bells were used as an argument for dating the destruction of Hasanlu IV (Dyson and Muscarella 1989: 17–18), but this aspect is beyond the scope of our topic here.

Other bells from Samaria, Beth Shean, Yavneh Yam and Khirbet Qeiyafa

All the bells discussed so far were found in Iron Age contexts. But as bells are such a rare category of finds, I add here a short survey of the other bells known to me from the southern Levant.

Four bells were found in Samaria by the Harvard expedition (Figure 4:7–8, 13–14). One of them was dated to the Roman era, and the others are undated (Reisner *et al.* 1924: 362, fig. 235). From the published drawings, we can identify bells of three different types:

1. Two hemispherical bells, typical of the Hellenistic era (Figure 4:7–8).
2. A bell with a slightly conical body and a large handle integrated in the body (Figure 4:13). A similar bell from Beth Shean was dated to the Byzantine or Islamic period (Figure 4:12).
3. A bell with a carination in its upper part (Figure 4:14).

One hemispherical bell has been reported from a Hellenistic context at Yavneh Yam. The bell was made from bronze, and the iron clapper was still intact inside (Figure 4:9; Ashkenazi and Fantalkin 2019). The lower part of the bell is decorated with two parallel incisions around its circumference. Close parallels were unearthed at Al-Mina on the Orontes, from where two bells are mentioned, MN270 and MNN34, one of them illustrated (Figure 4:10; Woolley 1938: 165, fig. 25; Ashkenazi and Fantalkin 2019).

Two bells were published from the early excavations of Beth Shean (Figure 5:11–12; FitzGerald 1931: pl. XXXVIII:2, 5). These bells were found in levels dating from the Byzantine and Islamic eras.

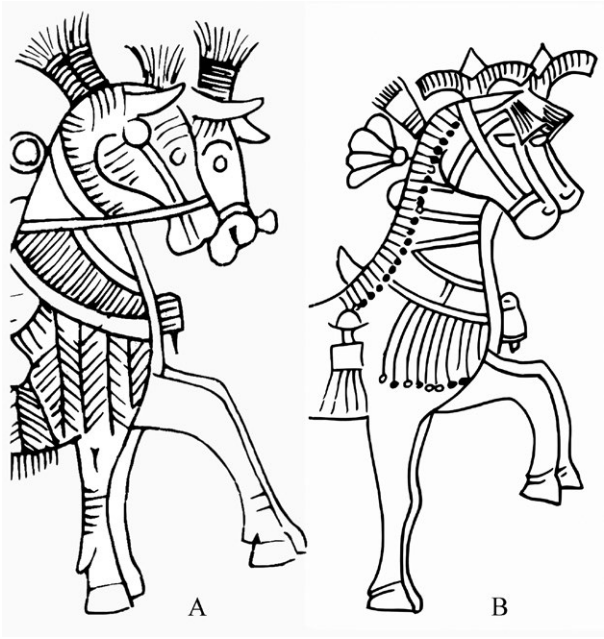

Figure 10. Depictions of Urartian horses with a bell suspended from their neck (Özgen 1983: figs. 10, 12).

Three bronze bells were uncovered in my excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, from the late Persian and early Hellenistic eras. These will be presented in the final excavation report on the metal objects from the site.

Discussion: The Megiddo bell in context

This study has examined bells from the Levant, Assyria, Urartu and Hasanlu. The archaeological contexts of some 80 bells from Nimrud, some 40 bells from Hasanlu and two bells from Salamis indicate a clear connection with horse harnesses. Over 150 bells are depicted on Assyrian reliefs (Tables 1–2). As summarized by Özgen, "Bells, so far, represent the most frequent finds of elements associated with horses' harnesses or bridles in the Near East" (1984: 109).

Among the most impressive discoveries made in Stratum IV in Megiddo are the elaborate stable complexes, a large one in the southern part of the site and a smaller one in the north. Near the southern complex the large subterranean Silo 1414 was found (Figure 3; Lamon and Shipton 1939: figs. 34, 72, 77). In the original publications this silo, with an estimated capacity of 450 cubic meters, was considered intrusive and ascribed to Stratum III. However, later studies connect it with the earlier Stratum IV and the nearby large stable complex, where it was used for storing fodder for the horses.

The stables have received much attention over the years (Yadin 1976; Holladay 1986; Cantrell and Finkelstein 2006; Cantrell 2011; Liverani 2012). In a somewhat romantic approach, Franklin (2017: 99) summarized their function and use:

> "The stable-city in Stratum IV of Megiddo was an incredible military and commercial enterprise. … this giant training and trade center was designed to deal with hundreds of horses at any one time, training and selling them –not just as a chariot team of two or three horses but as a complete chariot squadron of 20 or 50 chariots. These horses from the same stable would therefore be at ease with one another and trained to fight together, ready to be incorporated into the great chariot divisions of the Israelite and Assyrian armies."

Some scholars have disputed the stable interpretation and argued that these large public complexes in Megiddo were storage facilities (Pritchard 1970). Indeed, despite the elaborate architecture of the stable complexes, not a single object from Megiddo has been associated with horses up to now, in sharp contrast to the rich assemblages of Salamis, Nineveh and Hasanlu. This rather surprising situation at Megiddo may be due to clearing of the relevant equipment in antiquity, or the excavation methodology of the 1920s may simply have missed the relevant finds. This situation has now changed, thanks to the association of the bronze bell with horse harnesses.

In my view, the bell belongs to Stratum IV and dates from the 8th century BCE. An alternative interpretation might argue, based on the Neo-Assyrian reliefs, that the bell originated in Stratum III. This was a well-planned Assyrian city (Peersmann 2000). In this case the bell is not associated with the stables of the Kingdom of Israel but dates from the 7th century BCE and is intrusive in Stratum IV. I prefer the first scenario, which implies that the bell was unearthed in its original context; convincing arguments would be needed in order to claim that it is intrusive.

Acknowledgment

The figures and map were made with the help of Silvia Krapiwko.

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Chapter 35:
The Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis

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Abstract. This analysis concerns several types of worship scenes found in the glyptic imagery preserved as impressions on clay administrative tablets from Persepolis. This important body of data is known today as the Persepolis Fortification Archive, dating to the middle-late years of the reign of Darius I (ruled 522/521–486 BCE). The principal scene, a worshipper who stands before divine symbols that rest on pillared pedestals, here called the Late Babylonian worship scene, is well-known, often characterized as the most distinctive of the glyptic landscape in the Late Babylonian period. At Persepolis, the Late Babylonian worship scene occurs on a large number of seals and exhibits a rich iconographic repertoire; indeed, the evidence from Persepolis is as numerous and varied as from any Babylonian archive. The seals from Persepolis raise numerous issues regarding the chronology and iconographic and stylistic development of the scene in the Late Babylonian archives. These Persepolitan seals present a particularly interesting case study in the complexities of cultural interaction between Iran and Babylonia in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE.

Keywords: Late Babylonian archives, stamp seals, Late Babylonian worship scene, Babylonian religious imagery, *marru*, stylus, Persepolis Fortification Archive, Persepolitan glyptic, ^{d}KASKAL; ^{d}PA PAP ZI.

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- Appendix 3a: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI / ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* (and variants) on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis, as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by provenance
- Appendix 3b: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI / ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* (and variants) on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis, as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by date
- Appendix 4: List of seals in Appendix 1 where the seal-user can be identified

I. Introduction

Our honorand has addressed on multiple occasions the depiction of the divine in the visual arts of Western Asia in the 1st millennium BCE. I would highlight especially her important explorations concerning the increasing use of abstract (i.e., non-anthropomorphic) representations of the divine in the visual arts of Assyria and Babylonia in the first millennium BCE.[1] Although Tallay Ornan's research on divine representation has focused primarily on the 1st millennium cultures predating the Achaemenid, her insights provide important frameworks for considering the rich glyptic evidence from Persepolis dating to the reign of Darius I.

This analysis will concern several types of worship scenes as they are found in an important body of data, the glyptic imagery preserved as impressions on a large archive of administrative tablets from Persepolis, known today as the Persepolis Fortification Archive.[2]

[1] E.g., Ornan 1993, 1995, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2009a, and 2009b.

[2] I wish to express thanks to members of the Persepolis Fortification Archive Project, located at the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures at the University of Chicago, especially the project director,

The scenes, worshippers who stand before divine symbols, are well-known, often characterized as the most distinctive of the glyptic landscape in the Late Babylonian period. For the purpose of this discussion, I will distinguish three major compositional formats under the rubric "Late Babylonian worship scene," recognizing both that all three compositional formats appear after the Late Babylonian period proper and that compositional formats #1 and #3 (see below) may in fact pre-date 626 BCE, the accession year of Nabopolassar (generally accepted as marking the beginning of the Late Babylonian period).[3]

II. The Late Babylonian worship scene

One of the most recognizable scenes within the glyptic of ancient Western Asia depicts a worshipper, rendered in profile, standing with arm(s) upraised, palm(s) almost always cupped upward, before divine emblems. In the Late Babylonian period and the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius I, what I shall here call the Late Babylonian worship scene assumes three principal compositional formats:[4]

1. worshipper before divine symbols that rest on a pedestal or plinth (e.g., Figure 1);[5]
2. worshipper before divine symbol(s) that rest on the top of one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects; in many examples of this compositional type, the *kudurru*-shaped objects themselves sit on pedestals or plinths (e.g., Figure 2);
3. worshipper before divine symbols that float in the field or rest on a ground line (e.g., Figure 3).

The three compositional formats appear on both cylinder and stamp seals; however, compositional format #1 (worshipper before divine symbols that rest on a pedestal or plinth) occurs almost exclusively on stamp seals, compositional format #2 (worshipper before divine symbol[s] that rest on the top of one or more *kudurru*-shaped object[s]) almost exclusively on cylinder seals. Compositional format #3 occurs frequently on both stamp and cylinder seals.[6]

The stamp seals that carry compositional format #1 are often variations of a conoid stamp, sometimes faceted (hence pyramidal stamp seals).[7] Actual stamp seals (as opposed to impressions of seals on clay tablets) that carry compositional format #1 apparently have a very wide distribution; unfortunately, most stamp seals that carry compositional format #1 in museum collections are unprovenanced.[8] Stamp seals carrying

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[3] Commentators (both Assyriologists and art historians) employ the terms Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian in various manners (see, e.g., Ehrenberg 1999: 2). Traditionally in Assyriological studies, both designations, Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian, have often defined not a chronological phenomenon (a political period in Babylonia ending with Cyrus' capture of Babylon in 539 BCE) but a set of archival/textual practices; thus, Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian often encompass the reigns of Cyrus–Cambyses, the Achaemenid kings, and even, the Seleucid kings (see, e.g., Jursa 2005: 1–3; Holtz 2009: 1–2; see Root 2003: 258–259 on the historiographic implications of such an approach). Following Ehrenberg (1999: 2), I generally use Late Babylonian to signal a chronological phenomenon, the period in Babylonia after the fall of Assyrian hegemony, encompassing the reigns of Nabopolassar (accession 626, 625–605 BCE rule) to Nabonidus (556–539 BCE). Given the lack of any major rupture in the textual and glyptic tradition in Babylonia after Cyrus' capture of Babylon in 539 BCE, I also employ Late Babylonian in the following manners: "Late Babylonian worship scene," to distinguish a type of scene occurring on seals dating to the Late Babylonian period, the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, or the Achaemenid period (see below); "Late Babylonian archives," to identify a vast body of archival material that comes from Babylonia and often contains dated texts spanning the Late Babylonian period down into the reign of Darius I. I restrict the term Achaemenid to refer to the reigns of Darius I–Darius III.

[4] Bregstein (1993: 57), in her important study of the glyptic from the Murašû Archive at Nippur, dating to 454–404 BCE, opts to apply "Late Babylonian worship scene" only to those impressions of cylinder seals which carry compositional format #2 (see below) and have been applied as if a stamp seal, the stamped impression of the cylinder producing only the worshipper. While such sealing practices are quite common in the Late Babylonian archives (cf. Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 91–101, 106–133), "Late Babylonian worship scene" in this study will designate the scene type in a broad sense, as most commentators would generally understand the label (see also the comments of Altavilla and Walker 2016: 122). Root (1996, 1998, and 2003) has previously addressed various aspects of stamp seals and/or the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis.

[5] On the position of the hands, see Ehrenberg 1999: 15; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 113.

[6] This analysis can only seek to explore some of the questions and issues associated with the Late Babylonian worship scene. A comprehensive study of all compositional formats is a desideratum.

[7] On the pyramidal stamp seal, see Root 1998.

[8] See, e.g., Root 2003: 274–75 note 49; Ritter (2009: 3) characterizes seals carrying compositional format #1 as follows: "[i]n the Neo-Babylonian period (6th cent.) stamp seals with a worshipper facing a pedestal with s[pade] and stylus became a mass product, dominating

Figure 1. Compositional format #1: two impressions of a stamp seal on a tablet (YBC 4022) from the Eanna temple archive at Uruk (Ehrenberg 1999: no. 34). Nebuchadnezzar II year 39. Courtesy E. Ehrenberg.

Figure 2. Compositional format #2: impression of a cylinder seal on a tablet (PTS 2372) from the Eanna temple archive at Uruk (Ehrenberg 1999: no. 137). Nabonidus year 12. Courtesy E. Ehrenberg.

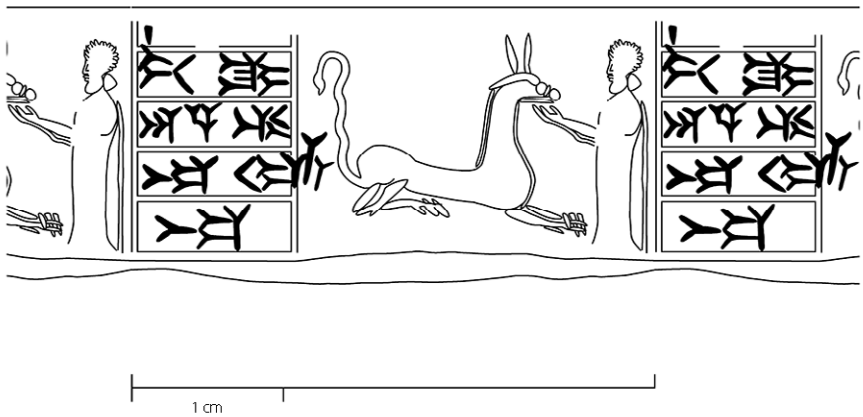

Figure 3. Collated line drawing of PFS 2096* (M.B. Garrison).

compositional format #1 occur also very frequently as impressions on clay legal, economic, and administrative tablets from Babylonia and administrative tablets from Persepolis.

The great majority of cylinder seals that carry compositional format #2 are attested as impressions on clay legal, economic, and administrative tablets from Babylonia; actual cylinder seals that carry compositional format #2 are quite rare in museum collections.

Compositional formats #1 and #2 are very distinctive, indeed, instantly recognizable. For over 140 years, commentators have linked these scenes principally with the Late Babylonian period but recognized that they continue well into the Achaemenid period (see below).[9] The formats, iconography, and significance of the scenes have been discussed in a variety of venues; Ehrenberg (1999: 13–25) and Ornan (2005a: 115–129) provide two excellent overviews of the imagery.[10]

This study will concern principally compositional formats #1 (worshipper before divine symbols that rest on a pedestal or plinth) and #2 (worshipper before divine symbol[s] that rest on the top of one or more *kudurru*-shaped object[s]). As noted, these two formats are some of the most well-known in the glyptic of Western Asia in the 1st millennium BCE. Compositional format #3 encompasses a much more diverse array of evidence and requires a separate study; I will address, however, a few seals from Persepolis that belong to this compositional format owing to their close connections to compositional formats #1 and #2.

III. Compositional format #1: worshipper before divine symbols on pedestal or plinth

Because there is a long history of the depiction of a worshipper before a deity and/or symbols in Assyria and Babylonia, it may be useful to define the exact components of what I am identifying as compositional format #1:

1. generally, there is only one worshipper, who stands and is depicted in profile;[11]
2. generally, only one arm is depicted, bent and held out before the body, the hand upturned in front of the face;
3. the worshipper almost always is bearded and has a large mass of hair at the back of his neck;
4. the worshipper wears an ankle-length garment, often decorated;
5. the divine symbols, most commonly the spade (*marru*) of Marduk and the stylus of Nabû, rest on a pedestal that often has vertical striations ("panelling," "pillared pedestal," "altar," etc.);[12]
6. in some cases, a *mušḫuššu* dragon couchant rests on the pedestal, and the divine symbols emerge directly from its back or rest on a thin plinth on its back;
7. there may be other divine symbols in the upper field, most commonly a crescent or star, more rarely a winged symbol;
8. the scene occurs almost exclusively on stamp seals.

Despite the century that has passed since Menant's initial discussion of the Late Babylonian worship scene, a monographic treatment of the scene has never been undertaken; indeed, there remain many unresolved issues of iconography, style, and socio-administrative significance.[13] For example, even in its most well-known format, i.e., compositional format #1, a worshipper before a *marru* of Marduk and stylus of Nabû that rest on a pedestal, the identification of the stylus is plagued with questions. Seidl's (1998) important article in the *RlA* (*s.v.* Nabû) identified various symbols representing writing implements and tablets relating to Nabû on Kassite *kudurru* monuments of the second millennium BCE.[14] On Kassite *kudurru* monuments, the stylus takes two basic forms:

1. wedge-shaped (Seidl 1998: 26, nos. 1, 3–4);
2. two thin vertical elements, generally squared-off at their top edges, connected by a short horizontal bar at their midsections; this format is sometimes identified in English as a "double-stylus" (Seidl 1998: 26, nos. 2, 5).

The wedge-shaped stylus Seidl connected with a stylus for writing on clay tablets, the double-stylus, which Seidl called a "Rillengriffel," for writing on wax on wooden writing boards.[15] She stated that the wedge-

the Mesopotamian imagery and spreading quickly into peripheral regions...." See also below, note 58.

[9] As observed already by Menant (1886: 129–141). Menant focused, however, principally on cylinder seals.

[10] See also Ornan 1995: 39–43.

[11] There are a few designs where a second worshipper is added to the scene, standing on the other side of the pedestal with symbols and facing toward them (see below, scheme 1.9).

[12] See Ornan (2005a: 119–129) for an inventory of principal divine symbols that occur on pedestals in these scenes. In rare instances, the divine symbols rest on a thin undecorated plinth rather than a pedestal.

[13] E.g., some commentators assume that the worshipper is meant to represent the seal-user and/or identifies the "religious disposition of the seal owner" (e.g., Klingbeil 1992: 102).

[14] Seidl 1998: 24–25, especially the figures on pp. 26 and 27, nos. 1–14. This analysis developed from her earlier survey of Babylonian *kudurru* monuments (Seidl 1989). The monument type here called *kudurru* is also known as an entitlement *narû* ('stele'). The definitive study of the *kudurru* monuments is Seidl 1989; on the term entitlement *narû*, see Slanski 2000: 96–99. See also the discussion in Ornan 1995: 48–49; 2005a: 130–132.

[15] Seidl 1998: 25: "Aufgerichtet stehend sind der keilförmige Tontafelgriffel [...] und der Rillengriffel für Holztafeln [...] gleichwertig das Symbol N.s im I. Jt." Seidl (2007: 124) provides more detail on the distinction between these two types of styli: "An einigen der Holztafeln

shaped stylus is almost completely supplanted by the "Rillengriffel" in stamp seals of the Late Babylonian period.[16] Other commentators have made no functional distinction between the wedge-shaped stylus and the double-stylus (both used for writing on clay tablets and on wax on writing boards).[17] Driver appears to suggest that the double-stylus provided flexibility to the scribes.[18] Still a few commentators appear to read the double-stylus with horizontal bar as a clay tablet rather than a stylus.[19]

By the 7th–6th centuries BCE, the wedge-shaped stylus is exceptionally rare. In this period, the stylus assumes three distinct forms:

1. a single thin vertical element, often narrowing to a point at its top (what will here be the "stylus");
2. two thin vertical elements often narrowing to points at their tops (what will here be the "double-stylus");
3. two thin vertical elements, often narrowing to points at their tops, and linked by one or more short horizontal cross-bars (what will here be the "double-stylus with bar").

In compositional format #1, the stylus, the double-stylus, and/or the double-stylus with bar occur. In some representations, there may be three thin vertical elements resting on the pedestal (in addition to the *marru*): a stylus and the double-stylus or double-stylus with bar. As far as I can tell, no commentator has attempted to document the patterns of occurrences of each of the types of styli, to reckon the relative popularity of each of the types (and combinations), or to parse the possible meanings of the various forms that the stylus takes and the various combinations that occur.[20]

Stamp seals that carry compositional format #1 generally are executed in either a modelled style of carving or an abstract cut-and-drilled style (see below).

IV. Compositional format #2: worshipper before divine symbol(s) on *kudurru*-shaped object(s)

Compositional format #2 is equally intriguing, related in style, composition, and iconography to compositional format #1, but presenting some different research questions. In compositional format #2, a single worshipper generally faces multiple divine symbols. The format has two principal versions:

1. worshipper stands before divine symbol(s) on one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects;
2. worshipper stands before divine symbol(s) on one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals.

Compositional format #2 occurs almost exclusively on large cylinder seals.[21] The *kudurru*-shaped objects at times are decorated with a ladder-like pattern.[22] In distinction to compositional format #1, the worshippers sometimes are shaven-headed and beardless (e.g., Figure 2); in many examples, they hold a distinctive

aus Nimrud hafteten noch mit Orpiment versetzte Wachsreste, in die ein Keilschrifttext mit extrem kleinen Zeichen eingedrückt ist. Die eigenartige Griffelform, die über Jahrhunderte gleichblieb, kann also nicht durch eine abweichende Schrift bedingt sein, sondern muß mit dem Trägermaterial der Schrift, dem Wachs, zusammenhängen, in das die Zeichen eingedrückt wurden. Der wesentliche Unterschied zum Tontafel-Griffel ist die vertikale Rille, die für die Gestaltung der Keile nicht von Bedeutung sein kann. Die Rille mag zur Aufnahme einer Substanz gedient haben, die dem Wachs zugeführt wurde: Farbe, die die Zeichen besser hervortreten ließ? Ein Weichmacher, der das schnell erhärtende Wachs punktuell geschmeidig machte? Ein Antihaftstoff, der die Klebrigkeit des Wachses milderte? Die eigenartige Handhaltung der Schreiber [...] könnte darauf hinweisen, daß der Fluß des eingeschlossenen Stoffes von Zeige- und Mittelfinger reguliert wurde. Doch zur Klärung des Schreibvorgangs auf Wachs sind weitere Untersuchungen notwendig." Her identifications recur in the scholarship; e.g., Zamazalová 2011: 326. Some commentators attempt to identify one of these forms of the stylus with the Akkadian term *qān ṭuppi* (e.g., Klingbeil 1992: 103, fig. 2).

[16] Seidl 1998: 25: "In spätbab. Zeit scheint der Rillengriffel den Tontafelgriffel fast ganz verdrängt zu haben; denn auf den spätbab. Stempelsiegeln ist fast nur noch dieser –zusammen mit dem Spaten Marduks– dargestellt." Ornan (2009b: 2) states that the double-stylus with bar(s) "stands for the double-edged writing stylus of Nabu."

[17] E.g., Pomponio 1978: 207–215; Black and Green (1992: 134 [*s.v.* Nabû]) identify the "single wedge" as possibly a writing stylus; Ornan 2009b: 2.

[18] Presumably offering the ability to make wedges of varying sizes and configurations; Driver 1948: 29: "Clearly, therefore, a single stylus cannot have served all purposes in the archaic period and, even though one type may have sufficed for ordinary writing in subsequent periods, it must have varied in shape as much as the wedges themselves according to the period and custom of the individual scribe or the school to which he may have belonged; and a special stylus must also certainly have been necessary for particular purposes. Indeed, the double-stylus on seals and boundary-stones suggest that such functionaries may often have provided themselves with varying types for use according to need..."

[19] Black and Green 1992: 185 (*s.v.* wedge): the wedge-shaped implement "probably represents not so much the basic element of cuneiform writing as the actual stylus used to produce this script on leather-hard clay. [...] It may be shown vertical or horizontal, single or double, sometimes next to (or replaced by) another piece of writing apparatus, which has been interpreted as a tablet or writing board" (see fig. 254, where the double-stylus with horizontal bar is identified as "tablet or writing board").

[20] Note the comments of Seidl (1998: 25), in discussing the forms of the stylus on Neo-Assyrian seals: "Die bewußte Unterscheidung der Griffelformen auf den Siegeln kann noch nicht erklärt werden. Sind zwei verschiedene Nabü-Gestalten repräsentiert? Dies ist angesichts des wechselnden Vorkommens auf den Kudurru unwahrscheinlich. Weisen möglicherweise die unterschiedlichen Symbolformen auf die unterschiedlichen Berufe der Besitzer hin, Tontafel- bzw. Holztafelschreiber oder etwa bei Nr. 11 (*MBG = the often-illustrated stamp seal from Tell Keisan that carries an elaborate double-stylus with bar on its base and two wedge*-shaped *styli, stacked the one over the other, on its side*) eines Schreibers in beiden Medien?"

[21] Collon (2001: 193) astutely observes that the compositions on the large cylinder seals are often quite spacious.

[22] Ehrenberg 1999: 18; see also below. As other commentators, I recognize the problems inherent in labelling these objects as "*kudurru*-shaped" (a term I borrow from Ehrenberg 1999). While some commentators identify these objects on seals as *kudurrus* (e.g., Collon 2001: 193), in fact we cannot be certain as to what, exactly, they represent.

vessel with wide body, narrow neck, and pronounced rim.[23] This format of the Late Babylonian worship scene also almost never depicts the *marru* of Marduk or the stylus of Nabû.[24] Many seals carrying compositional format #2 are carved in an exceptionally rich and detailed modelled style. Owing to these distinctive features of iconography and the often exceptionally rich carving style, this format of the Late Babylonian worship scene on cylinder seals would appear to signal something distinctive from compositional format #1 on stamp seals.[25]

As Ornan (1995: 49; 2009a: 114) and other commentators have observed, the Late Babylonian worship scene is principally a Babylonian phenomenon. The distinctive dress of the attendant is Babylonian. The symbols depicted on the pedestal are linked with deities who are situated primarily (but not exclusively) in a Babylonian context. This is especially true of the most commonly occurring symbols in compositional format #1, the *marru* of Marduk and the stylus of Nabû.[26] Lastly, seals carrying the Late Babylonian worship scene occur very commonly in the surviving 1st millennium BCE archives from Babylonia (see below).

V. Some observations on the chronology of the Late Babylonian worship scene

It is difficult to identify the exact moment in time and space when the various formats of the Late Babylonian worship scene first emerged.[27] Certainly, in the Assyrian period there are many possible prototypes in glyptic wherein a worshipper stands with hands upraised before a deity in anthropomorphic form or a divine (non-anthropomorphic) symbol.[28] Many observers have noted that Babylonian *kudurru* monuments, dating from the late 2nd through the mid–1st millennium BCE, depict the *marru* of Marduk and the stylus of Nabû on pedestals as well as other symbols often found in the Late Babylonian worship scene on seals: e.g., the *mušḫuššu*, scorpion-bird-man, goat-fish, ram-headed scepter, and lamp.[29] These *kudurru* monuments generally depict, however, a series of divine symbols side by side, often in registers; only rarely do worshippers appear on the *kudurru* monuments, and certainly there are no compositions on the *kudurru* monuments similar to the various formats of the Late Babylonian worship scene on seals.[30] So, too, some Assyrian seals show iconographic elements commonly found in the Late Babylonian worship scene such as the *marru* of Marduk, the stylus of Nabû, the *mušḫuššu*, etc.[31]

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the lack of sealed and dated tablets from Babylonia spanning the period from the end of the Kassite Dynasty to the accession of Nabopolassar (626–605 BCE), our earliest dated evidence for compositional format #1 on seals actually occurs on tablets from Assyria.[32]

The earliest dated impressions of compositional format #1 occur with Assyrian texts naming post-canonical Assyrian eponyms (*līmmu* officials).[33] I know of only two that possibly predate the reign of Nabopolassar (626–605 BCE):[34] two impressions of a stamp seal on a tablet from

[23] See, e.g., Ehrenberg 1999: 15, 24–25, nos. 125–153; the worshipper sometimes turns the palm of the hand outward (rather than cupped upward); Balzer 2007: chpt. 10, 221–122.

[24] Ehrenberg 1999: 25; in this regard Figure 2 is quite unusual in showing a double-stylus with bar. Altavilla and Walker (2016: 119), commenting upon the appearance of the *marru* and stylus on stamp seals but not on cylinder seals: "we can only guess that the contract (*MBG: contrast*) between cylinder and stamp seals reflects social patterns which we are quite unable to define."

[25] Collon (2001: 193) cites MacGinnis' (1995: 164–181) observation that cylinder seals with compositional format #2 at Sippar were used by scribes and priests linked with the temple; the worshippers depicted on the seals, thus, could represent the seal-users (see below, note 56). While the scribes and priests that MacGinnis identified do, with one exception, seem to be linked with cylinders that have compositional format #2, there are many other types of officials who use cylinders with similar designs. Collon (2001: 193) states that the earliest examples of what is here called compositional format #2 date to the reign of Nabonidus (555–539 BCE) and that the seal and design continue to occur on tablets dating from the reigns of Cyrus to Xerxes I. In fact, the chronological distribution of the scene is longer (see the discussion below, p. 482–485).

[26] See Ehrenberg 1999: 17, 19–20.

[27] Discussions of the origin of the Late Babylonian worship scene are complicated by commentators often including scenes that fall generally into the category of "worshipper before symbols," of which there are various iterations in the Neo-Assyrian period (see, e.g., Herbordt 1992: 110–111).

[28] As often observed, e.g., Ornan 2009a: 114.

[29] On the monument type here called *kudurru*, see above, notes 14 and 22. On the *marru* of Marduk and stylus of Nabû on *kudurru* monuments, see Seidl 1989: 117–125, 230, 233.

[30] For worshippers on *kudurru* monuments, see Ornan 2005a: figs. 4 (= Seidl 1989: 25, no. 20, from Susa) and 8 (= Seidl 1989: 46, no. 76, *kudurru* of Marduk-nādin-aḫḫe, from Babylon).

[31] See, e.g., the discussion in Herbordt 1992: 110; Ornan 2005a: 147–167. A fragmentary (stamp?) seal dating to 682 BCE shows a *mušḫuššu* on whose back are a *marru* and a "gabelförmiges Symbol" (perhaps a stylus?) (Herbordt 1992: 252, Nin 204, pl. 15.25). On the *mušḫuššu*, see Matin 2021.

[32] On the lack of sealed tablets from Babylonia for the period of the Kassite Dynasty to the accession of Nabopolassar, see Jursa 2005: 1–2; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 6. The Neo-Babylonian Cuneiform Corpus (NABUCCO) lists some 474 tablets from Babylonia definitively pre-dating 626 BCE (another approximately 200 tablets are categorized "early Neo-Babylonian" but are not precisely dated to a year): https://nabucco.arts.kuleuven.be. These numbers roughly align with Jursa's (2005: 1) statement: "[f]rom the late eighth century to the ascent of the Neo-Babylonian empire in 626 BCE about 600 tablets are known." I have not attempted to determine how many of these approximately 600 tablets carry seal impressions.

[33] The dating of any one post-canonical Assyrian *līmmu* official is often uncertain (on the issues, see, e.g., Millard 1994: 72–78; Reade 1998: 255–256; Mitchell and Searight 2008: 4–5). By convention, dates assigned to post-canonical *līmmu* officials are preceded with an asterisk. The CDLI web page (https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=list_of_neo_assyrian_limmu_officials) devoted to Neo-Assyrian eponyms follows for the most part Parpola with corrigenda by Baker (https://build-oracc.museum.upenn.edu//pnao/eponymup dates/index.html).

[34] Ornan (1995: 41, figs. 5–7) identifies three stamp seals from Nimrud that she dates to the first half of the 7th century. While they show a worshipper before symbols, only one of them (her fig. 7, see below) strictly speaking falls into compositional format #1. Ornan 1995: 41, fig. 5 (= Herbordt 1992: Nrd 101) is a worshipper before what may be a *marru* and stylus (but not situated on a pedestal). Ornan states that the text dates to "not before 666 BCE"; Herbordt (1992: 197) indicates

Fort Šalmaneser at Nimrud naming the eponym Ṣalmu-šarri-iqbi (*630 BCE or *623 BCE);[35] two impressions of a stamp seal on a tablet from Fort Šalmaneser at Nimrud naming the eponym Assur-gimilli-tirri (*641 BCE, *638 BCE, or 636 BCE).[36] The former shows a worshipper before a *marru* and stylus on a *mušḫuššu*; a small winged symbol is in the upper field.[37] The latter is poorly preserved in two impressions, and the one published photograph is not very helpful. There is certainly a worshipper, but I cannot discern the elements toward which he is directed.[38]

The evidence for compositional format #1 is slight for the reign of Nabopolassar (626–605 BCE). E.g., the scene occurs on a stamp seal applied to a tablet from Nimrud dating to the eponym Sin-ālik-pānī (*615 BCE) and a stamp seal applied to a tablet from Aššur dated *613 BCE.[39]

The rarity of sealed and dated tablets from Babylonia from the early 1st millennium to the mid-7th century BCE clearly hampers any attempt to make sweeping generalizations about the date and contexts of the initial appearance of the Late Babylonian worship scene on seals. There do not appear, however, to be any attestations of any variation of compositional format #2, worshipper before divine symbol(s) on one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects, in the period leading up to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE).

The data become slightly more numerous in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, but all the surviving archives are highly irregular in the chronological spread of tablets.[40] While the Eanna temple archive at Uruk contains tablets dating from the reign of Nabopolassar through the reign of Darius I, the distribution of dated tablets is very uneven and the reign of Nabopolassar is documented by only one seal (Ehrenberg 1999: 13–14). The earliest dated attestation of compositional format #1 on tablets from the Eanna temple archive occurs in Nebuchadnezzar II year 38 (567/566 BCE).[41] The earliest secure attestation of a worshipper before *kudurru*-shaped objects from Eanna is Nebuchadnezzar II year 30 (575/574 BCE) (or afterwards).[42]

A similar picture emerges from the published glyptic from Sippar (principally from the Ebabbar temple archive). The earliest sealed tablets in the British Museum from Sippar date in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (Altavilla and Walker 2009: 20, 155–158). The earliest attestation of some version of the Late Babylonian worship scene dates to Nebuchadnezzar II year 9 (596/597 BCE): a stamp seal showing compositional format #1.[43] The

that the date of the text cannot be determined. Ornan 1995: 41, fig. 6 (= Herbordt 1992: Nrd 51) is a worshipper before a T-shaped altar and thus represents a different type of worship scene. Herbordt (1992: 194) gives the *līmmu*-official as Upāqa-ana-Arbaili whom Reade (1998: 256) dates to *638 BCE, Parpola (in Radner 1998: xviii) to *633 BCE, and Falkner (1954–56: 119) to *631 BCE. Ornan 1995: 41, fig. 7 (= Herbordt 1992: Nrd 28) is a worshipper before a spade and double-stylus; there is no pedestal (although a horizontal line runs across the bottom of the symbols). The seal in any case occurs on a tablet carrying the eponym Sīn-ālik-pānī who is dated to *615 BCE by all commentators, thus the middle of the reign of Nabopolassar.

[35] Dalley and Postgate 1984: 81–82, no. 31, pl. 47.31 (= Herbordt 1992: 172, Nrd 3). Parpola dates Ṣalmu-šarri-iqbi to *630 BCE (in Radner 1998: xix), Falkner (1954–56: 116, 119) and Reade (1998: 256) to *623 BCE.

[36] Dalley and Postgate 1984: 82–83, no. 32, pl. 47.32 (= Herbordt 1992: 195, Nrd 96). Assur-gimilli-tirri has been dated to *641 BCE (Falkner 1954-56: 109–110, 118), *638 BCE (Parpola in Radner 1998: xviii), and *636 BCE (Reade 1998: 256–257).

[37] The photograph in Dalley and Postgate (1984: pl. 47.31) is difficult to read. One impression is illegible (written over in ink for the museum inventory number). On the other impression one can discern the upper body and arm of the worshipper, a winged disk, the head and back of the *mušḫuššu* and the *marru* and thick stylus, which appear to rest on a plinth on the back of the *mušḫuššu*. Dalley and Postgate (1984: 82) state that 1) the worshipper is kneeling (this pose would be very unusual; the one semi-legible impression gives no indication that the worshipper is kneeling); 2) there is only a stylus on the *mušḫuššu*; 3) there may be a second worshipper at right (this would appear to be what I am reading as the stylus; see the comments of Herbordt [1992: 172 note 6], who also cannot see the second figure).

[38] Cf. Herbordt 1992: 195: "links ein Altar(?) mit Symbol (oder Mondsichelstandarte?). rechts ein Beter?" This description is adapted from Dalley and Postgate (1984: 83): "... on left possible altar-base and symbol(s), on right, possibly worshipping figure." I read (fairly legibly) the worshipper at left, the "symbol" at right.

[39] Nimrud tablet: Herbordt 1992: 178 (Nrd 28), pl. 14.5; Aššur tablet: Klengel-Brandt 2014: 19, no. 85, pls. 20 and 54 (Klengel-Brandt does not give the name of the *līmmu* official).

[40] The disarray surrounding the state of Late Babylonian archives is often-stated: among many issues, one should highlight the poor quality of the 19th and early 20th century excavations, the lack of properly excavated, documented, and provenanced tablets, the disbursal of tablets from any one archive across many museums and private collections, the tradition of publishing texts based upon museum collections rather than archival collections, the tendency to ignore or poorly document the occurrence of seals on tablets, etc. The well-known Late Babylonian archives, temple and private, come from five principal sites: Babylon, Borsippa, Nippur, Sippar, and Uruk. Jursa (2005) is an indispensable overview of the principal archives and their state of publication, but his emphasis is the textual (rather than glyptic) evidence. Waerzeggers (2003–2004, 2018) provides critical contextual information on the "end-of-archives" in 484 BCE and the "shape and the structure of the (*MBG: Late Babylonian archival*) corpus of the long sixth century BCE" (p. 91) (see especially her Table of Archives pp. 115–129). Walker (2020) offers a brief overview of seals in Late Babylonian archives and their state of publication, focusing on seal usage. While the texts from some archives have received monographic treatment (e.g., Wunsch 2000a; Baker 2004), Ehrenberg (1999) remains the only in-depth study of the glyptic from one particular archive (Bregstein [1993], concerning the glyptic from the Murašû Archive at Nippur, is an unpublished Ph.D.). Several websites are devoted to the study of Late Babylonian archives where one may find the specialized literature on the study on individual archives: e.g., BabCity: Corpus of Babylonian Texts Concerning the Urban Landscape (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/babcity/archives/index.html); The Neo-Babylonian Cuneiform Corpus (NABUCCO) (https://nabucco.arts.kuleuven.be).

[41] Ehrenberg 1999: 59, no. 57, a worshipper stands before a *mušḫuššu* which rests on either a pedestal or thick ground line; on its back a *marru* and double-stylus with cross-bar at top emerge from a plinth.

[42] Ehrenberg 1999: no. 128. By secure I mean that the scene preserves one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects. If we include those "stamped" impressions of cylinder seals that show only a worshipper (who in all likelihood stood before *kudurru*-shaped objects), the earliest attestations (Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 95–98) are Nebuchadnezzar II year 38 (567/566 BCE).

[43] Altavilla and Walker 2009: 134, no. B23; other examples of stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 occurring on tablets dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II: Altavilla and Walker 2009: nos.

earliest secure attestation of compositional format #2 is not until Cambyses year 1 (529/528 BCE).[44]

The published seal impressions on tablets in the British Museum from Babylon and its vicinity (from various archives, the largest being the Egibi and Nappāḫu family archives and the Kasr archive [Jursa 2005: 61, 65–66, 68–69; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 7; Waerzeggers 2018: 122, 126, 129]) contain only one tablet securely dated to the reign of Nabopolassar (year 5 [622/621 BCE]).[45] The earliest attestation of compositional format #1 is a stamp seal occurring on a tablet dated to Nebuchadnezzar II year 15 (590/589 BCE).[46] The earliest attestations of compositional format #2 (and variants) are cylinder seals occurring on tablets dated to Nebuchadnezzar II year 12 (593/592 BCE).[47]

Among the sealed tablets in the British Museum published by Mitchell and Searight (2008), which is devoted to stamp seals on tablets coming from various provenances (and unknown provenances) and ranging in date from Adad-nerari III (810–783 BCE) down to the Seleucid period, there are only two seals possibly dating to the reign of Nabopolassar (Mitchell and Searight 2008: nos. 285–286) and seven seals dating to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE) (Mitchell and Searight 2008: nos. 287–292).[48]

The impressions of seals bearing compositional format #1 on Assyrian tablets, a few pre-dating the reign of Nabopolassar, raise, of course, the question as to whether compositional format #1 may in fact have originated in an Assyrian context. No commentator appears enthusiastically to have adopted such a reading; the consensus is that the scene first emerged in Babylonia. Based principally upon the important article by Zettler (1979), who collected the evidence for worship scenes on seal impressions on dated tablets known to him, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE) is often identified as particularly critical in the development of both compositional formats #1 and #2.[49] The fact that the earliest dated appearances of compositional format #1 occur on Assyrian documents is taken to reflect the dearth of sealed and dated documents from Babylonia of the late 7th century BCE.[50]

B22 (year 14), B24 (year 30+, = Mitchell and Searight 2008, no. 289). Many of the seals in Mitchell and Searight (2008) are from Sippar and the region of Babylon and hence are re-published in Altavilla and Walker (2009) and Altavilla and Walker (2016) but with different numbers. These three publications do not attempt systematically to chart collations among different impressions of the same seal, to provide collated line drawings of each individual seal (i.e., a drawing that represents all information for any individual seal rather than a drawing of a single impression of a seal), or even to illustrate all the seals included in their studies. Triangulating between these publications is often challenging.

[44] Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A07 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: nos. 354, 374b, 377b, 378c, 379b, 388, 389a, 390c, 391c, 393b, 394a, 395b, 396, 398b, 400, 402, 408a[?], and 411a; Mitchell and Searight do not record any of these collations). If we include those "stamped" impressions of cylinder seals that show only a worshipper, the earliest attestation is no. A01 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: nos. 306a, 319b, and 320a; again, these collations are not recorded in Mitchell and Searight), dating to Nabonidus year 15 (541/540 BCE); the cylinder seals nos. A04 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 301) and A30 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: nos. 350 and 384) are dated only generally to the period Nebuchadnezzar II – Nabonidus.

[45] Altavilla and Walker 2016: 123. The seal (no. A101) is a rather spectacular inscribed cylinder showing a worshipper before a large winged disk hovering above a "rosette-tree." The inscription is illegible.

[46] Altavilla and Walker 2016: 144, no. A301 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 288); the stamp seal no. A302 carries compositional format #1 and occurs on a tablet dated to Nebuchadnezzar II year 20 (585/584 BCE).

[47] Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A102, an unusual variation, a worshipper facing a crescent and large star floating above a panelled inscription; no. A103, a worshipper before a dog or bird on a pedestal; no. A104, a "stamped" cylinder showing a worshipper; no. B101, compositional format #2. Note also the cylinders dating to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II: no. A105, compositional format #2, worshipper before three pedestals carrying *kudurru*-shaped objects and symbols (years 24–29); no. A106, a "stamped" cylinder showing a worshipper (year 26); no. A107, a worshipper before a dog and lightning bolt resting on an elevated ground line (year 26; the seal has an enormous 7-line panelled inscription); no. B101, a worshipper before three pedestals carrying *kudurrus* and symbols (year 12); no. B102, a "stamped" cylinder showing a worshipper (year 29).

[48] See the comments above, note 43. A potentially intriguing seal, owing to its possible early date, is Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 255, for which they provide no illustration. The seal occurs on an unpublished bulla from Nineveh (51-9-2,379 [89961]). Mitchell and Searight (2008: 111) describe it as follows: "[Probably late 8th–7th century BCE]. Four times impressed: *mušḫuššu* to left with symbols on its back."

[49] See Zettler (1979: 259, Table 1) for his list of sealed and dated tablets, the earliest of which dates to Nebuchadnezzar II year 2 (603/604 BCE). Zettler included in his Table 1 various types of worship scenes, not just what is here called the Late Babylonian worship scene. For comments on the origin of the Late Babylonian worship scene in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, see, e.g., Porada 1948: 95; Buchanan and Moorey 1988: 56–57; Keel-Leu 1991: 122–123, 124–125; Herbordt 1992: 110; Jakob-Rost 1997: 65; Ehrenberg 1999: 19; Ornan 2005a: 115–116, 120; Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 201–202; Klengel-Brandt 2014: 86. Zettler (1979) was principally interested in: 1) attempting to track the moment when "Babylonian" imagery (i.e., the Late Babylonian worship scene) gave way to "Achaemenid" imagery (i.e., distinctively Achaemenid iconography such as the Persian court robe, dentate crown, etc.); and 2) the "time lag factor" involved in the process. While the study was in some ways contrasting two separate phenomena, a scene-type (the Late Babylonian worship scene) and a set of iconographic conventions (Achaemenid court-centric iconography), the study marked an important recognition of the potentials of the study of dated impressions of seals rather than unprovenanced seals in museum collections. The data available to him suggested that the Late Babylonian worship scene first appeared in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE) and subsequently disappeared in the reign of Darius I to be replaced by "Persian type seals." He concluded (1979: 268) that the time-lag factor for the "transition from Neo-Babylonian to Achaemenid seal types might be set at roughly 25 years." By necessity, the seals from the Persepolis Treasury Archive and the Murašû Archive at Nippur figure prominently in Zettler's study. The Murašû Archive at Nippur (454–404 BCE), which is the most important archive post-dating those from Persepolis, remains to this day unpublished in any comprehensive sense (see Bregstein 1993 and 1996). Zettler was, of course, well acquainted with the glyptic from the Murašû Archive (much of the archive is housed at the University Museum at Penn). Zettler (1979: 264–65) mentions PFS 93* from the PFA but does not appear to have had access to the glyptic from the PFA other than a personal communication from Hallock (Zettler 1979: 264 note 14).

[50] Fügert (2015: 174) has recently surveyed the issue of the initial appearance of the Late Babylonian worship scene in light of the glyptic from Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad in northern Assyria. The site has produced one of the most important glyptic corpora surviving from

While the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II appears indeed to have been a formative period for Babylonia on various levels, it is clear from the evidence discussed above that compositional format #1 appears on tablets from Assyria dating contemporary to the reign of Nabopolassar (625–605 BCE); and two seals that carry the scene appear on tablets that seemingly predate his reign. As Fügert (2015) remarks, the appearance of these worship scenes in Assyria can be read as Babylonian imports or products emerging from Babylonianizing workshops in Assyria.[51] Compositional format #2, on the contrary, appears to be a later phenomenon, centered in Babylonia, and not attested before the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II.

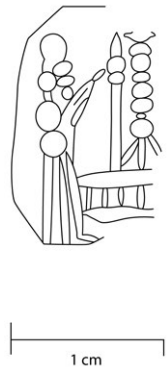

Figure 4. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 1605s (M.B. Garrison).

VI. Some observations on seal carving styles and the Late Babylonian worship scene

Several commentators have addressed seal-cutting styles in Assyria and Babylonia in the first millennium BCE.[52] The various formats of the Late Babylonian worship scene occur in two distinct carving styles, the one an abstract cut-and-drilled style (e.g., Figure 4), the other variations of a modelled style (e.g., Figures 1–2).[53] Without a comprehensive study of the variations in compositional formats for the Late Babylonian worship scene and the chronological distribution of the dated examples, it is unclear whether the two distinct styles, abstract cut-and-drilled style and modelled style(s), mark chronological, regional, and/or functional distinctions.[54] Three interesting phenomena are, however, immediately apparent:

1. stamp seals (compositional format #1) may be executed in either an abstract cut-and-drilled style or various modelled styles of carving;
2. cylinder seals (compositional format #2) are executed only in various modelled styles of carving;
3. impressions of stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 preserved on Late Babylonian legal, economic, and administrative tablets can be executed in either various modelled styles of carving or the abstract cut-and-drilled style, but overwhelmingly the preferred style is modelled; in contrast, actual stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 preserved in museum collections are almost universally executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.

The first and second issues involve distinctions in seal shape, cylinder versus stamp seal. Many commentators have noted that compositional format #1 occurs almost exclusively on stamp seals. Cylinder seals that carry the Late Babylonian worship scene are less often addressed as a glyptic type, perhaps owing to their lack of representation in museum collections.[55] Some of the cylinder seals showing a worshipper before *kudurru*-shaped objects on which there are symbols are very

Assyria (both sealed tablets and actual seals). Four stamp seals from the site show compositional format #1 of the Late Babylonian worship scene (nos. 233, 238, 239, and 241; see Fügert 2015: vol. 2, 444). Unfortunately, none of them appear on tablets that carry the names of *līmmu* officials; dating is possible thus only via archaeological context, which is, obviously, less precise than eponyms. Fügert (2015: vol. 1, 174–175) concludes: "Der grösste Anteil der Darstellungen von Adoranten vor Symbolen ist aber, wie auch durch andere Forschungen bestätigt, in das späte 7. und 6 Jh. zu stellen. [...] Hier wird entweder eine babylonische Beeinflussung der assyrischen Glyptik erkennbar oder die Verwendung babylonischer Siegel vor Ort belegt. Die stratigraphische Situation der beiden Motive 239 und 241 ist schwierig zu bewerten: Meyer setzt den Kontext der Objekte stratigraphisch früh an, ich würde mich (vielleicht auch aufgrund der eher für die frühe Einordnung ungewöhnlichen Thematik einem Zirkelschluss unterliegend) für eine spätere Datierung aussprechen. [...] Je nachdem, wie der Kontext dieser Objekte bewertet wird, ist die Aussage Keel-Leus [*MBG: Keel-Leu 1991: 124*], dass sich in spätbabylonischer Zeit das Darstellungsrepertoire auf die Motivik des Beters vor Symbolen oder gar die alleinige Darstellung von Symbolen verengt, zu bestätigen oder zu verneinen. M. E. ist sie zu bestätigen und sowohl das vermutlich der spätbabylonischen Zeitstellung zuzuweisende Motiv 238 als auch das der gleichen Zeit zuzuweisende Rollsiegelmotiv 58, das in seiner Darstellung gut vergleichbar ist [...], unterstützen die späte Datierung der Motivik in dieser groben Darstellungsweise." With regard to this question, a particularly intriguing seal from Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad is no. 233 (Fügert 2015: vol. 2, 199–200). It shows compositional format #1, a worshipper before a *marru* and double-stylus on a pedestal, but a bull-man holding aloft a partial figure in a crescent occurs between the worshipper and the pedestal. The scene is a remarkable conjunction of Assyrian (bull-man holding aloft a partial figure in a crescent) and Babylonian (worshipper before divine symbols on a pedestal) imagery. It opens the door, I think, for serious consideration of the possible Assyrian origins of the Late Babylonian worship scene.

[51] For Fügert's comments, see above note 50.

[52] E.g., Buchanan and Moorey 1988: 48–49; 56–57; Herbordt 1992: 1–10; Collon 2001: 2–6; Root 2003: 258–263; Fügert (2015: vol. 1, 19–28) provides an important Forschungsstand.

[53] I use both designations to indicate broad carving techniques, not specific workshop affiliations.

[54] See Altavilla and Walker (2009: 119), who make no attempt to distinguish carving styles. MacGinnis (1995: 171) states that the seals on the tablets from Sippar are executed in a modelled style. See Ehrenberg (2000a: 318–319) on glyptic carving styles in the Late Babylonian archives.

[55] Several commentators have observed that the *marru* and stylus are rarely depicted on cylinder seals (e.g., Altavilla and Walker 2016: 118).

large and beautifully carved with exceptionally well-modelled figures and much detail.[56]

It is quite interesting that stamp seals that carry compositional format #1, when preserved as impressions in the Babylonian archives, are almost always carved in one of various modelled styles (but never as rich as what we see on cylinder seals that carry compositional format #2).[57] In museum collections, by far the majority of stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 are executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style. Although there are not many actual stamp seals bearing compositional format #1 from meaningful excavated provenances (as opposed to unprovenanced seals in museum collections), the few that have been published are almost always in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.[58] Heads, hair, and beards consist of a series of drill holes; human bodies and arms and the pedestals are a series of horizontal, diagonal, and vertical cuts. The distinction between seals impressed on tablets from Babylonia and actual seals in museums extends also to seal format. On sealed tablets from Uruk, Sippar, and Babylon, the percentage of stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 and cylinder seals carrying compositional format #2 is approximately equal.[59] In museum collections, stamp seals carrying compositional format #1 are very common, while cylinder seals carrying compositional format #2 are exceptionally rare.

VII. The Persepolis Fortification Archive

Briefly stated, the Persepolis Fortification Archive (hereafter PFA) consists of clay administrative documents that record the state's intake, management, and re-allocation of locally produced food commodities in a region covering what is basically modern day Fārs in southwestern Iran.[60] The allocations of commodities fall into three broad categories: basic subsistence rations for work groups; basic subsistence rations for travellers

[56] Examples occurring on tablets from Babylon are especially striking: e.g., Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A105, A109, A112, A125, A131, A135, A142, A143, A145, A158, A160, A163, A193, B103, B104, B117, B118, B122, B126, B128, B131, B132, B186 and P105. Other worship scenes on cylinder seals from Babylon showing a worshipper before symbols (without *kudurrus*) are also spectacular glyptic masterpieces; see, e.g., Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A101, A102, A107, A108, A111, A119, A123, A124, A148, A156, A194, A213, B108, B110, B135 and P101. This glyptic material from Babylon deserves an extended study. MacGinnis (1995: 170), based upon a small number of sealed letter-orders from the Ebabbar at Sippar, concluded that the *šangû* priests always used large cylinder seals (nos. A10, A17 [= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. K01], B01, B05 and B08) showing a worshipper (his drawings do not show the full scene, only the worshippers, and thus make for some difficulties). These seals are now somewhat better published in Altavilla and Walker 2009 (I follow their convention of removing the period from MacGinnis' number schema). One of MacGinnis' seals, no. A17 (= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. K01), is a stamp seal which MacGinnis' drawing appears to indicate. I cannot, however, account for his reckoning of the seal as a cylinder (Altavilla and Walker [2009: 148] think that this impression is "from the stamp of a stamp-cylinder, and that the concentric lines on the stamp simply continue the parallel lines which decorated the mount of the cylinder-seal"; I am uncertain how one can recognize that this impression is from the engraved end of a cylinder seal). From Altavilla and Walker's descriptions of these seals (none of which are fully preserved) that MacGinnis linked with *šangû* priests, one can determine: no. A10 has a bald and beardless worshipper holding a vase before at least two *kudurrus*, one of which rests on a pedestal and supports a crescent; no. B01 has a beardless worshipper facing a winged symbol; no. B05 has a bald and beardless worshipper holding a vase before at least one *kudurru* on which there is a crescent; no. B08 has a bald and beardless worshipper before a winged scorpion-man and crescent. The linkage between the *šangû* priests and cylinder seals bearing worship scenes is often emphasized (e.g., Ornan 2009a: 108).

[57] At the Eanna at Uruk, the tablets dating from Nabopolassar to the reign of Darius I, the Late Babylonian worship scene is executed almost exclusively in various modelled styles; the same is true of the seals occurring on clay tags, probably from Hafudh, now in the Yale Babylonian Collection (see Ehrenberg 2000a). Among the published seals from Sippar and the region of Babylon, the situation is similar, where only a handful of seals are cut in the abstract cut-and-drilled style; from Sippar: nos. A04, A22, A40, B24. On Sippar no. A37, the head and hair of the worshipper are rendered by drill holes, while the body is modelled. The combination of the two styles on one seal is not unusual in Assyro-Babylonian glyptic. Unfortunately, a substantial proportion of the seals from the region of Babylon published in Altavilla and Walker (2016) have no illustration. Only one of the illustrated seals, no. A303, may be executed in a cut-and-drilled style (the photograph does not allow for precision on this issue). Interestingly, Persepolis presents the exact opposite situation from Babylonia: the great majority of seals that carry compositional format #1 are executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style (see below).

[58] See, e.g., Klingbeil (1992), who inventories seals with an excavated archaeological provenance from Syro-Palestine dating to the Persian period (54 seals that carry figural imagery). Klingbeil (1992: 102) notes that the Late Babylonian worship scene is the compositional format with the largest number of seals (11 seals) from this group. All of these seals are stamp seals and all are executed in a cut-and-drilled style. Ornan (2009b: 2) provides a more recent inventory of excavated stamp seals showing the Late Babylonian worship scene from Syro-Palestine and indicates that all of them are executed in the "Neo-Babylonian Late Drilled Style." A cut-and-drilled style is so prevalent among seals which carry the Late Babylonian worship scene in museum collections that commentators often mistakenly assume that the scene occurs only in this style. The rich collection of 1st millennium BCE stamp seals in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin has some excavated material (principally Assur and Babylon); the examples of the Late Babylonian worship scene in that collection are, again, overwhelmingly in a cut-and-drilled style (Jakob-Rost 1997: nos. 239, 245–249, 251–258, 260–278, 299–308, 330; various modelled styles: nos. 237, 240–242, 250, 293–294, 297–298). The Late Babylonian worship scenes on stamp seals in the Ashmolean Museum are likewise mostly unprovenanced (Buchanan and Moorey 1988: nos. 94 and 95 are from Deve Hüyük) and executed in a cut-and-drilled style (Buchanan and Moorey 1988: nos. 380–395). This stylistic distinction between seals that occur on clay tablets and those preserved in museum collections has been noted previously (e.g., Ehrenberg 1999: 13: Ehrenberg 2000a: 318–319).

[59] The evidence for the Late Babylonian worship scene from Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad in Assyria differs from that in the Late Babylonian archives. Although few in number, the Late Babylonian worship scenes at Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad are found only on stamp seals executed in a cut-and-drilled style (Fügert 2015: 444, nos. 238–241). The interesting stamp seal that combines the Late Babylonian worship scene with a bull-man atlantid supporting a figure in a crescent, discussed above note 50, is rendered, however, in a modelled style of carving (Fügert 2015: no. 233). Herbordt illustrates two seals from Nimrud carrying the Late Babylonian worship scene; both are stamp seals executed in modelled styles of carving (Herbordt 1992: pl. 14, nos. 5 [Nrd 28] and 6 [Nrd 101]).

[60] For overviews on the PFA, see Garrison and Root 2001: 1–60; Henkelman 2008: 65–179; Garrison 2017: 15–116; Azzoni *et al.* 2017; Henkelman 2021a. Proceedings of conferences on the PFA have been published in Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper 2008 and Jacobs, Henkelman, and Stolper 2017. For historical contextualization of the PFA see, among others: Wiesehöfer 2001: 66–79, 268–270; Briant 2002: 422–448, 938–943; Kuhrt 2007: 763–814 (select texts with commentary); Henkelman 2017.

on the royal road system; what may be construed as payments/maintenance for high-rank administrators (and their entourages) employed in the PFA agency. Thousands of tablets from the PFA survive. Many carry date formulae; these tablets date in the period 509–493 BCE. A few texts document administrative activity as early as 518/517 BCE and as late as 487 BCE.[61] The surviving archive is, clearly, only a part of a much longer-lived administrative phenomenon.

Seals play a critical role in the normal run of generating clay documents in the PFA; indeed, the amount of sealing that occurs at Persepolis is remarkable in comparison to Assyrian and Babylonian archives (state, temple, and private).[62] Two of the three document types at Persepolis, tablets carrying Aramaic texts and tablets that carry no text (only the impression[s] of seal[s]), are always sealed. Approximately 86% of tablets among the third and most numerous document type, tablets carrying text in cuneiform Elamite, are sealed. Currently the PFA Project has documented 4,446 distinct and legible seals.[63] The PFA may represent the single largest glyptic corpus associated with an excavated archive from ancient Western Asia.

VIII. The Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis

The glyptic from the PFA contains a substantial number of stamp seals carrying compositional format #1, a worshipper standing before a pedestal on which there are divine symbols (see Appendix 1); cylinder seals carrying compositional format #2 are, however, exceptionally rare (indeed, only one example attested to date). Not only is the large number of stamp seals with compositional format #1 significant, but the variety of symbols that occur in the scene is as rich as from any Babylonian context.

IX. Compositional format #1 at Persepolis

Below I list the basic variations ("schemes") of compositional format #1 deployed in the glyptic from the PFA. All of the seals are stamp seals. Each scheme is subdivided by the combinations of divine symbols on the pedestal.[64] I include a few designs which eschew the pedestal in favor of a thin plinth. With one exception (PFS 289*s [Figure 5]), the worshippers are bearded and have a mass of hair at the back of their neck.

Figure 5. Collated line drawing of PFS 289*s (M.B. Garrison).

Scheme 1.1: worshipper before marru and stylus or double-stylus on pedestal – total 64 stamp seals

a. worshipper before *marru* and stylus on pedestal: 6 stamp seals
b. worshipper before *marru* and stylus on pedestal and winged symbol: 4 stamp seals (Figures 6–7)
c. worshipper before *marru* and double-stylus on pedestal: 25 stamp seals (Figure 8)
d. worshipper before *marru* and double-stylus with bar on pedestal: 6 stamp seals (Figure 9)
e. worshipper before *marru*, stylus, and double-stylus on pedestal: 2 stamp seals
f. worshipper before *marru* and wedge-shaped stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal
g. worshipper before *marru* (no stylus) on pedestal: 1 stamp seal
h. worshipper before 2 *marru* and double-stylus on pedestal: 3 stamp seals
i. worshipper before 2 *marru*, stylus, and double-stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal
j. worshipper before 3 *marru* and double-stylus with bar on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 10)
k. worshipper before symbols whose exact form cannot be determined on pedestal (generally only lower parts of symbols preserved or partially preserved): 14 stamp seals.[65]

[61] Stolper 2017: 735–737, 767–769, no. 6; in press. See also the discussion in Garrison (in press a), suggesting that the practical date-range of glyptic from the PFA is ca. 530–493 BCE (there are individual seals which clearly are antiques, dating as early as the Old Babylonian period, as well as certain seals which, owing to a variety of factors, can be more precisely dated).

[62] On sealing practices in the PFA, see Garrison 2017: 15–78.

[63] This count represents distinct individual seals often collated from multiple impressions on many tablets, not simply impressions of seals (of which there are well over 10,000).

[64] There remain a fairly large number of tablets whose seal impressions have not yet been read. Thus, these numbers will most certainly change. We are, however, fairly confident, given the large number of seals that have been processed to date, that the relative distribution of seals among the variations here listed will not substantially change. In order to relieve the text from dozens of references to individual seals, Appendix 1 provides an accounting of all schemes and relevant seal numbers. Two fragmentary stamp seals, PFS 648s and PFS 2868s, preserve only a worshipper. These seals undoubtedly showed some variation of compositional format #1 but have been excluded from the accounting that follows. I have included PFUTS 1370*s in category 1.1.a, although a stylus is not preserved (the passage where the stylus would have stood is not preserved).

[65] On these 14 stamp seals only the lower parts of symbols are preserved, or the symbols are not preserved. One assumes that most of these seals show a *marru* and stylus or double-stylus on a pedestal.

There is a wealth of variety in the manner in which this most well-known of Late Babylonian worship scenes can be configured. Scheme 1.1 is by far the preferred formula for the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis. Within scheme 1.1, the most common expression is a worshipper before a *marru* and a double–stylus on pedestal (25 seals). The relatively low number of scenes showing a worshipper before a *marru* and double–stylus with bar on a pedestal is noteworthy. A few seals have two (PFATS 159s, PFATS 466s, PFS 279s, PFUTS 1265s) or three *marru* (PFATS 133s [Figure 10]). The possible wedge–shaped stylus on PFS 1576s is very unusual. In all legible instances (with one exception), only one arm of the worshipper is indicated, bent and held before the upper body and head; where preservation allows a clear reading, the hand is almost always upturned in front of the face.[66] A crescent or a star occurs in the upper field in 50% of these designs; the crescent by far is the more popular of the two symbols.[67] Four seals have a winged symbol in the upper field.[68] On no design identified to date does the worshipper hold a vessel in scheme 1.1.[69] The great majority of the designs in scheme 1.1 are rendered in an abstract cut-and-drilled style; some 11 seals are cut in a modelled style.[70]

The four stamp seals that include a winged symbol are quite interesting and exhibit some unusual features. PFATS 656s (Figure 6) has a large figure emerging from a winged ring and a star floating in the upper field. The tail of the winged symbol creates a wide space between the worshipper and the *marru* and stylus on a pedestal. PFS 958s (Figure 7) also combines a winged symbol and a star, but the composition is much more compressed than that on PFATS 656s; the *marru* and thick stylus are uniquely rendered as resting on the ends of a thin undecorated plinth.[71] There is a cross-shaped object at far left and what appears to be a small plant (date palm?) at right. Both arms of the worshipper are depicted, another oddity of the design. PFUTS 215s has only a winged symbol in the upper field. PFUTS 220s is very close compositionally and stylistically to PFS 958s, although the winged symbol floats alone in the upper field. These four seals also stand out owing to their style, all executed in various modelled styles of carving (rather than an abstract cut-and-drilled style). Given the interest in the winged symbol in Achaemenid culture, its appearance in these four scenes is noteworthy, although these scenes do not offer any new insights into the identification of the winged symbol in the Achaemenid period. The winged symbol likewise occurs infrequently

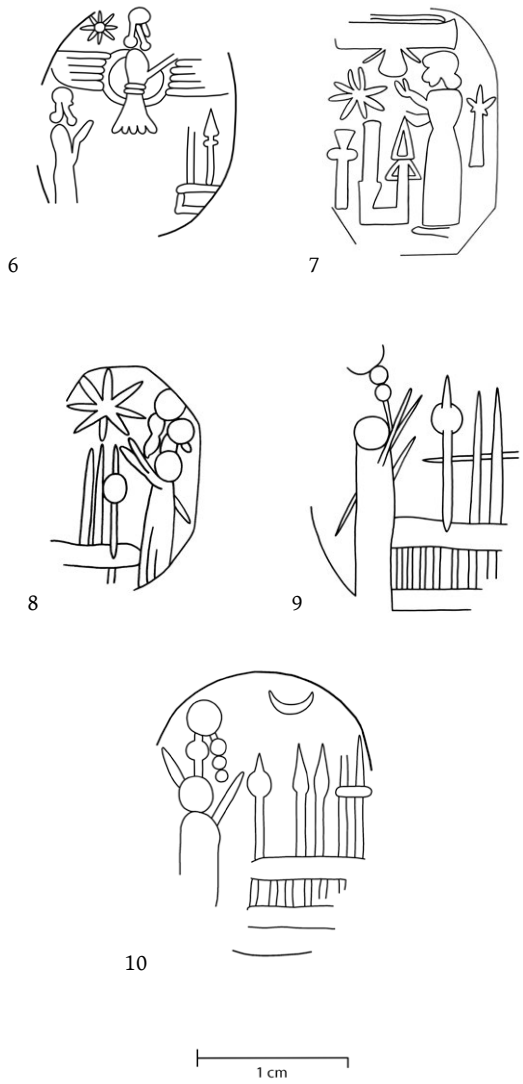

Figure 6. Collated line drawing of PFATS 656s. Courtesy E.R.M. Dusinberre.

Figure 7. Collated line drawing of PFS 958s (M.B. Garrison).

Figure 8. Collated line drawing of PFS 273s (M.B. Garrison).

Figure 9. Collated line drawing of PFS 1037s (M.B. Garrison).

Figure 10. Collated line drawing of PFATS 133s. Courtesy E.R.M. Dusinberre.

[66] The worshipper on PFUTS 51s may be pointing toward the *marru*; preservation is, however, very poor. On some of the more abstractly executed designs, a hand is not indicated (e.g., PFUTS 1056s, PFUTS 1433s).

[67] See Appendix 1. The upper zones of several seals are not preserved; this count thus represents a minimum. Crescent: PFATS 28s, PFATS 31s, PFATS 39s, PFATS 133s (Figure 10), PFATS 466s, PFS 279s, PFS 623s, PFS 1121s, PFS 1271s, PFS 1414s (dot-in-crescent), PFS 2093s, PFS 2105s, PFS 2753s, PFS 3025s, PFUTS 51s, PFUTS 296s, PFUTS 418s, PFUTS 549s, PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11); star: PFATS 159s, PFATS 656s (Figure 6), PFS 262s, PFS 273s (Figure 8), PFS 668s, PFS 958s (Figure 7), PFS 1159s, PFS 3117s, PFS 3143s(?), PFS 3317s, PFUTS 1056s, PFUTS 1265s.

[68] See the discussion below.

[69] See the discussion below, p. 505.

[70] Modelled style: PFATS 31s, PFATS 39s, PFS 1228*s, PFS 1271s, PFS 2365s, PFS 3025s, PFS 3142s, PFUTS 215s, PFUTS 388s, PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11), PFUTS 1657s.

[71] See Ehrenberg (1999: 19) on the thick plinth as a possible abbreviated form of the decorated pedestal.

in the Late Babylonian worship scene as preserved in the Babylonian archives.[72]

PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11) carries a Babylonian inscription: ^{d}KASKAL. This same inscription occurs on seven other seals from the PFA. Of the eight total seals that carry this inscription at Persepolis, six are stamp seals, two are cylinder seals.[73] Previous scholarship has documented the same inscription on unprovenanced seals and seals preserved as impressions in archival contexts in Babylonia (see Appendices 2a and 2b).[74] The inscription consists of two logograms and renders, apparently, a divine name;[75] curiously, the second logogram, read here as KASKAL, is attested to date only in seal inscriptions.[76] Accordingly, the exact reading of the inscription is much debated: e.g., a divine name (generally identified as Nabû, Marduk, or Sîn), *ḫarrānu* (according to Ehrenberg relating to Sîn), an invocation to a deity, a "catchword."[77] The inscription ^{d}KASKAL seems related to another unusual logographic inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI (discussed below, scheme 1.8 and appendices 3a and 3b).

For many years, the earliest dated attestations of the inscription ^{d}KASKAL were on tablets from the reigns of Cambyses and Darius.[78] Altavilla and Walker (2016: 144, no. A304) have recently published a stamp seal, a variation of compositional format #1, carrying the inscription on a tablet from Uruk dated to Neriglissar year 3 (557/556 BCE).[79]

Figure 11. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 1370*s (M.B. Garrison).

[72] E.g., Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 40 and 42 (neither text on which the two seals occur can be dated; Ehrenberg places them only generally in the "Late Babylonian" period). For cylinder seals carrying a worshipper before winged symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects from Sippar, see Altavilla and Walker 2009: nos. A07 and B29 (see also nos. B01 and P04, both very fragmentary cylinder seals that have winged symbols apparently in worship scenes); stamp seals that carry compositional format #1 with a winged symbol: nos. A25 (two texts dated to year 17 Nabonidus) and A36 (text dated to year 11 Nabonidus). For cylinder seals carrying a worshipper before divine symbols, including the winged symbol, from Babylon, see Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A101, A148, perhaps A235, B108, B112; stamp seal that carries compositional format #1 with a winged symbol: no. B201 (perhaps dating to the reign of Neriglissar). For some unprovenanced stamp seals with winged symbols in compositional format #1, see Jakob-Rost 1997: nos. 239, 242–243, 245.

[73] Stamp seals: PFS 161*s (Figure 14), PFS 451*s (Figure 15), PFS 1205*s (Figure 13), PFS 1216*s (Figure 16), PFS 1228*s (the inscription is poorly preserved and the reading is uncertain), PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11); cylinder seals (discussed below, schemes 3.1 and 3.2): PFS 813* (Figure 17), PFS 1240* (Figure 12).

[74] See Bregstein 1993: 108 note 172, nos. 217, 219, 222, 225, and 232; Chandler 2021: 87–91. On Appendix 3, see the comments below, note 82.

[75] Commentators have also transcribed the inscription as AN.KASKAL, DUḪ x DUḪ, AN.KIB (see also below, notes 76 and 77).

[76] As observed by Lambert (1989: 543–544), who transcribed the inscription as DUḪ x DUḪ (a reading followed by several commentators).

[77] For *ḫarrānu*, see Bregstein 1993: 106–107, Ehrenberg 1999: 19 (*s.v.* no. 59). For a summary of opinions, see Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 211–212 note 82; Chandler 2021: 89–91. Bregstein's suggestion (1993: 108) that the second sign is meant to represent crossed styli, and thus essentially a "new abbreviation for (or new attribute of) Nabû," is still quite persuasive. A cylinder seal published by Klengel-Brandt (1969: fig. 3) apparently carries ^{d}KASKAL but with some additional sign(s) under the KASKAL logogram. On an unprovenanced stamp seal published by Porada (1948: no. 799), MEŠ has been added after ^{d}KASKAL. See the discussion below (scheme 1.8) in association with the related inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI.

[78] Bregstein (1993: 108 note 172) stated that the earliest dated attestation of the inscription is a stamp seal applied to a tablet from Nippur (not Babylon, as Bregstein) dated to Darius I year 11, month 6 (BE 8/1: 107 [pl. 45], early 515 BCE). Mitchell and Searight (2008: no. 377a) publish a seal carrying the inscription ^{d}KASKAL occurring on a tablet from Sippar dated to Cambyses year 6 (524/523 BCE). They equate this seal with MacGinnis 1995: no. A19. MacGinnis gave no indication that the seal was inscribed, either in his commentary or in his drawing (but the issue of inscriptions on seals is not addressed in MacGinnis 1995). Mitchell and Searight (2008: 135) equate their no. 377a with 18 other "seals": nos. 378a, 379a, 391a, 393a, 395c, 398a, 410a, 431, 443, 447, 449, 451, 453, 454, 455, 456, 458, 460a. They provide drawings for some of these seals, which in fact are drawings of individual impressions. The drawings are all different; a careful examination of all impressions would be needed to confirm that all these impressions represent one seal. The drawing linked with the tablet dated to Cambyses year 6 (their "seal" no. 377a) is ambiguous at best as to whether it is inscribed. To make the issue even more confusing, Altavilla and Walker (2009: 38 *s.v.* tablet no. 139) identify two distinct seals, A19a (inscribed) and A19b (not inscribed), where MacGinnis identified only one (A19) (Altavilla and Walker [2009] use in most instances MacGinnis' seal numbers). Altavilla and Walker (2009: 123) link 12 tablets with their no. A19a. Altavilla and Walker (2009: 123) state that no. A19a is first attested on a tablet dated to Cambyses year 6 (thus, in agreement with MacGinnis [1995] for his A19 and Mitchell and Searight [2008] for their no. 377a).

[79] Altavilla and Walker (2016: 144) state that "[t]here is no obvious duplicate among Ehrenberg's seals." Altavilla and Walker's summary of the text gives no clues as to whether it may have come from the Eanna at Uruk (Altavilla and Walker 2016: 107, tablet 681 = 114562 = 1920,0615.158): "[c]ontract; refers to farmers digging [canals?] and [the earth?] being measured"). The scene on the seal is somewhat unusual: a worshipper stands before a tall pillared pedestal on which rests only a *marru*; floating in the field at right is a rhombus. The tall pillared pedestal is more commonly seen in compositional format #2 supporting a *kudurru*-shaped object.

PFS 1240* (Figure 12), occurring on a tablet dated to Darius year 21 month 12 (early 500 BCE), is the earliest dated attestation of the inscriptional formula at Persepolis.[80] While the earliest attestation of the inscription ^{d}KASKAL is from Babylonia, the eight examples preserved in the PFA are the second largest concentration of seals carrying this inscriptional formula from a single site.[81]

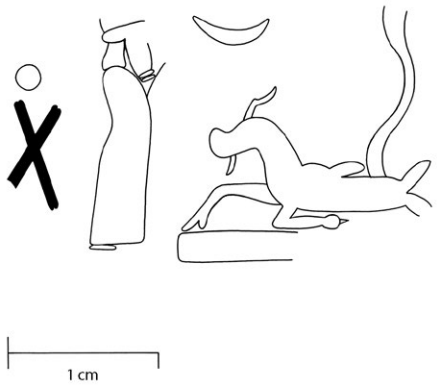

Figure 12. Collated line drawing of PFS 1240* (M.B. Garrison).

Appendix 2a collects attestations of the inscription ^{d}KASKAL from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis as well as two unprovenanced seals, organized by provenance.[82] Of 37 examples, only five are cylinder seals (two of which are from Persepolis); two of these cylinder seals (from Persepolis) carry compositional format #1, two compositional format #2, and one is a very fragmentarily preserved design showing a scorpion-man.[83] The 32 stamp seals carry predominately compositional format #1.[84] One notes again the irregular distribution of the evidence: principally impressions of seals on clay documents rather than actual seals in museum collections.

The eight Persepolitan seals that carry the Babylonian inscription ^{d}KASKAL are oddities among inscribed seals at Persepolis.[85] Firstly, these inscriptions are

[80] NN 1564, a travel ration.

[81] Ehrenberg (2000a) publishes a collection of 82 sealed clay documents ("tags") purchased by R.P. Dougherty, now in the Yale Babylonian Collection, and said to have come from Tell Ishân Hafudh, located somewhere south of Nippur. The documents appear to represent a unified assemblage; Ehrenberg (2000a: 319–320) suggests that they date to the reign of Darius or perhaps Xerxes. Some nine of the seals that occur on these tags carry the inscription ^{d}KASKAL, making them the largest concentration of the inscription from (presumably) a single site: Ehrenberg 2000a: nos. 5, 6, 14, 22 (= nos. 23 and 24), 28, 32, 46, 52, 53. The lack of any contextual information about the tags is unfortunate. In addition to the large number of attestations of the formula ^{d}KASKAL, the group is noteworthy for the relatively high number of seals that pair the inscription with imagery that does not include a worshipper: nos. 46, 52 and 53 (heroic encounters).

[82] Appendices 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b build on Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 205–210 [Table 1], 211–221), which is an extremely useful compilation of the data. I have added more examples of seals carrying these inscriptional formulae as well as several fields: type of seal (stamp or cylinder); scene; whether the inscription is read in the stone or in impression; and date. None of the appendices attempts to be a comprehensive accounting of all attestations of these inscriptions. Many of the seals in these appendices occur on tablets that actually have no documented archaeological context; they have been attributed to specific archives at specific sites based upon the contents of the text; in this regard, prosopographic data is particularly critical (see, e.g., Baker 2004: 5–12; Jursa 2005: 2–6, 57–59).

[83] Compositional format #1: PFS 813* (Figure 17) and PFS 1240* (Figure 12). Compositional format #2: Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3, on which ^{d}KASKAL has been overwritten (see below, scheme 1.8, in association with the related inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI); Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A157 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 425). Scorpion-man: Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. GSM106.

[84] See above, note 81, for non-worship scenes on stamp seals occurring on the clay tags said to be from Hafudh. A few stamp seals show worship scenes that are not compositional format #1: Bregstein 1993: no. 232, from the Murašû Archive at Nippur, and Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 28, from Hafudh(?), both showing a worshipper before a *Mischwesen* (hence, compositional format #3); PFS 161*s (Figure 14), worshippers disposed to either side of an altar/table; Baker 2004: 125 (tablet no. 44), 394 (no. 44), a god with a vase from which streams of water issue. Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 211 note 82) state that the inscription ^{d}KASKAL occurs "nearly exclusively next to the adoration scene"; Bregstein (1993) has similar comments: "[t]his basic inscription – with some variation in the complexity of the second sign – is attested on other Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid seals featuring worship scenes (p. 105) [...] "[w]ith the addition of the five examples from Nippur, the corpus of seals that feature this often overlooked or misinterpreted inscription can now be recognized as a coherent compositional type that may be restricted to ethnic Babylonian owners active during the period from Darius I through Darius II in northern and southern Babylonia" (p. 108). The evidence from Persepolis and other sites accords in some ways with Bregstein's statements, e.g., the preponderance of the seals carrying ^{d}KASKAL being worship scenes, but obviously the seals from Persepolis extend the spatial range of the inscription to southwestern Iran. Regarding the ethnicity of seal-users, at Persepolis we can identify the names of two of the seal-users among this group of eight seals that carry the inscription ^{d}KASKAL (see Appendix 4); both are Iranian names. PFS 1205*s (Figure 13) appears to be used by Mišdaya (PF 1263; Tavernier 2007: 345 [no. 4.2.1865]); this is the only occurrence of the name in the PFA. PFS 1240* (Figure 12) is used by Mitrabada (Miššabada) (Tavernier 2007: 251 [no. 4.2.1116]). The seal occurs on the reverses of two travel rations, NN 1564 and PF 1295. The two texts appear to record the same trip, in year 21, travelling with a large group, 260/262 individuals, to the king at Susa under a *halmi* ('sealed authorization') of Parnakka. In NN 1564, Mitrabada is qualified as a *kanzabara* ('treasurer'); on *kanzabara* and NN 1564 in particular, see Stolper 2004: 309; Henkelman 2008: 239 note 524; Henkelman 2017: 98–99, 191–195 (text edition with commentary), fig. 16; Tuplin 2020: 236, 238–239; Henkelman 2021a: 895. Of the other seals carrying the inscription ^{d}KASKAL at Persepolis, PFS 1228*s represents an unnamed *kurman* ('supply') office (PF 1283); on these officials, see Garrison and Henkelman 2020. PFS 161*s (Figure 14) and PFS 451*s (Figure 15) are a quite interesting pair. The seals almost always occur together and clearly represent a team of accountants/auditors. PFS 451*s can be linked with Beltin, a *mušin zikkira* ('account writer', 'accountant'). Unfortunately, the user of PFS 161*s is never named. That both use stamp seals bearing the Late Babylonian worship scene and the inscription ^{d}KASKAL cannot reflect a coincidence. PFS 1216*s (Figure 16) appears likewise to represent an accounting office. All three texts on which the seal occurs name a different individual, Pirraddakka (PF 1278), Ištinka (NN 75), or Dattanna (PF 1274); they are qualified as *mušin zikkira* ('account writer,' 'accountant'). On *mušin zikkira*, see Mikołajczak 2018: 24–25, 168, 327. Pirraddakka is Iranian (Tavernier 2007: 182 [no. 4.2.596, Pirraddakka]), Dattanna Iranian or Babylonian (Tavernier 2007: 513 [no. 5.4.2.17]). The user of the cylinder PFS 813* (Figure 17) cannot be determined. See also the discussion below (p. 491) concerning PFS 1216*s (Figure 16).

[85] See Chandler (2021) for extended analyses of inscribed seals at Persepolis. Currently, we have identified 206 inscribed seals in the PFA. The comments that follow are equally applicable to the seven seals from Persepolis that carry the Babylonian inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants) (see below, scheme 1.8).

Babylonian. The most common language employed in seal inscriptions at Persepolis is Elamite, followed by Aramaic.[86] Secondly, the inscriptions do not include a personal name. Almost all Elamite and Aramaic inscriptions on seals at Persepolis include a personal name. Thirdly, these inscriptions occur most commonly on stamp seals. At Persepolis, almost 90% of inscribed seals appear on cylinders.[87] Lastly, the inscription ^{d}KASKAL is associated exclusively with scenes of worship. Elamite and Aramaic seal inscriptions at Persepolis occur with a wide range of thematic categories.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, several of the eight Persepolitan seals that carry the inscription ^{d}KASKAL have rather interesting variations of compositional formats #1 and #2. On PFS 1205*s (Figure 13), there occurs a very rare combination of symbols on a pedestal: the worshipper stands before a *marru*, double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand. The seal is also executed in a bold cut-and-drilled style. PFS 161*s (Figure 14) falls outside, formally speaking, the Late Babylonian worship scene but is clearly closely related (see below, scheme 1.9): two worshippers flank a stand (perhaps cult furniture or an altar?). On PFS 451*s (Figure 15), a *mušḫuššu* supporting a *marru* and double-stylus with bar rests on a pedestal (see below, scheme 1.5). The seal is beautifully carved in a rich modelled style. PFS 1216*s (Figure 16) has a worshipper before a goat-fish and ram-headed staff (see below, scheme 1.7). The scene is very rare on stamp seals from Babylonia. A detailed modelled carving is employed. The stamp seal PFS 1228*s, whose inscription is poorly preserved, and PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11) show conventional versions of compositional format #1 (*marru* and stylus or double-stylus);[88] the carving is, as in several other of the seals that carry this inscription, richly modelled on both seals. Lastly, the cylinders PFS 813* (Figure 17) and PFS 1240* (Figure 12) are quite unusual in carrying both the inscription ^{d}KASKAL and variations of the Late Babylonian worship scene (see below, scheme 3.1).

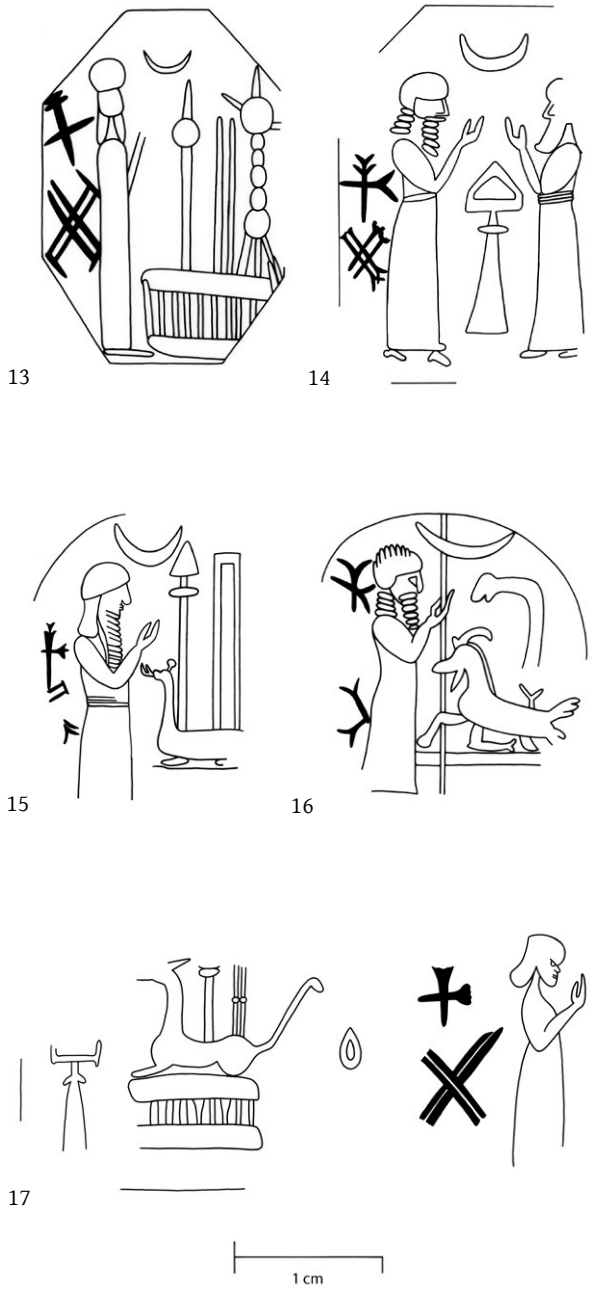

Figure 13. Collated line drawing of PFS 1205*s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 14. Collated line drawing of PFS 161*s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 15. Collated line drawing of PFS 451*s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 16. Collated line drawing of PFS 1216*s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 17. Collated line drawing of PFS 813* (M.B. Garrison).

[86] There are 74 seals that definitively carry Elamite inscriptions. Another 47 seals carry cuneiform inscriptions that are too poorly preserved to determine the language. We assume that most of these inscriptions are in fact Elamite. 44 seals from the PFA carry Aramaic inscriptions. 19 seals carry Babylonian inscriptions. Three of these Babylonian inscriptions occur on antique seals dating to the Old Babylonian period. Therefore, there are 16 seals that carry Babylonian inscriptions and date to the first millennium BCE. Of these 16 seals, eight carry the inscription ^{d}KASKAL, seven some version of the related formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI (see below, scheme 1.8). Thus, the two inscriptional formulae, ^{d}KASKAL and ^{d}PA PAP ZI, account for 15 of the 16 Babylonian seal inscriptions (dating to the 1st-millennium BCE) at Persepolis.

[87] Of the 206 inscribed seals in the PFA, only 20 are stamp seals.

[88] There may be a broken sign behind the worshipper on PFS 1228*s. If so, we certainly cannot provide a reading. If the traces are part of an inscription, one would assume that it read ^{d}KASKAL. The symbols on PFUTS 1370*s (Figure 11) are poorly preserved; we can see a *marru*; one assumes that some form of a stylus was also present.

Scheme 1.2: worshipper before marru *and stylus or* marru *alone on ground line – total 3 stamp seals*

a. worshipper before *marru* and stylus(?) on ground line: 1 stamp seal;
b. worshipper before *marru* on ground line: 2 stamp seals.

I include this very rare scheme even though there is no pedestal, which is a critical component of the definition of compositional format #1. Such a disposition of the divine symbols evokes Assyrian cylinder seals where the *marru* or the stylus commonly stand on a ground line or float in the field among other divine symbols.[89] Preservation of PFS 1426s is poor; PFATS 81s and PFUTS 1316s appear to be executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.

Scheme 1.3: Worshipper before marru*, stylus or double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 12 stamp seals*

a. worshipper before *marru*, stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 18);
b. worshipper before *marru*, double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 4 stamp seals (Figure 13);
c. worshipper before *marru* and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 3 stamp seals (Figures 4 and 19);
d. worshipper before two *marru* and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 20);
e. worshipper before double-stylus and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 2 stamp seals;
f. worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand and other undetermined symbols on pedestal: 1 stamp seal.

This scheme exhibits great variety; the defining characteristic is the inclusion of a lamp-on-a-stand with various combinations of a *marru* and/or styli. The lamp-on-a-stand is the symbol of Nusku, a god of light and fire.[90] On Kassite *kudurru* monuments of the 2nd millennium BCE, the lamp takes the form of a conventional oil-lamp (without a stand).[91] In the 9th century BCE, the lamp is first depicted resting on the top of a tall tripod-stand.[92] At Persepolis, as in the Babylonian archives, the stand generally consists of a series of vertically stacked circular/oval-shaped elements resting over two or three legs;[93] the lamp at the top of the stand is rarely articulated in the surviving impressions at Persepolis (but see PFUTS 1605s, Figure 4), or it is rendered only by a circular element. The top of the stand on PFUTS 1559s (Figure 20) terminates, uniquely, in a circular element from which emerge rays, as if a star or rays of light from a lamp. One seal, PFS 1205*s (Figure 13), includes a crescent in the upper field, two seals, PFS 1140s and PFS 2907s (Figure 18), a star.[94]

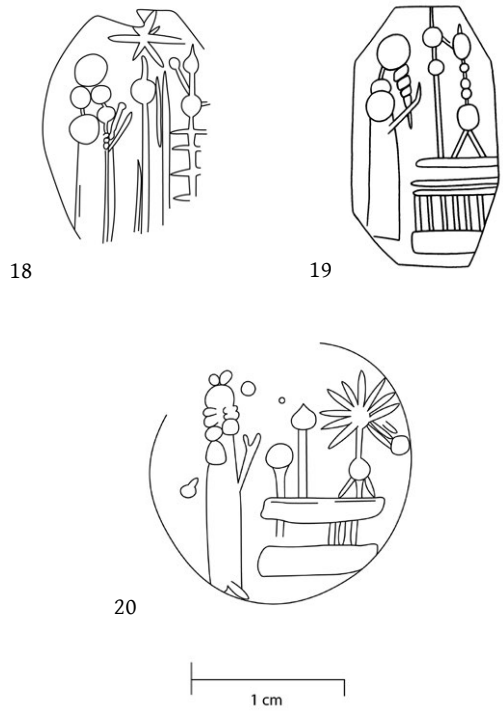

Figure 18. Collated line drawing of PFS 2907s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 19. Collated line drawing of PFS 186s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 20. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 1559s (M.B. Garrison).

The lamp-on-a-stand resting on a pedestal is very rare in the Late Babylonian worship scenes surviving in the major Babylonian archives.[95] In the Murašû Archive, the

[89] E.g., Collon 2001: nos. 204, 215, 228, 233, 241, 243 (generally classified as Babylonian), 244–245, 248–252, 255, 257, 281; Fügert 2015: nos. 1, 15, 20, 30, 56, 78. A free-standing *marru* or stylus also occurs on a few stamp seals; e.g., Fügert 2015: nos. 234, 240, 242; Herbordt 1992: Nrd 28 (Sîn-ālik-pānī) and Nrd 101 (no date); see also the unprovenanced stamp seals in Jakob-Rost 1997: nos. 262, 270, 273–274, 276, 303–304, 307–312 (nos. 308 and 309 come from Babylon).

[90] Black and Green 1992: 116; Streck 2001: 632; Ehrenberg 2002: 57 ("the archetypal symbol of Nusku"); Ornan 2005a: 119, 121–122; Frayne and Stuckey 2021: 286–287 (*s.v.* Nuska).

[91] See Black and Green 1992: figs. 7 and 93, illustrating the divine symbols on a *kudurru* monument from Susa.

[92] Streck 2001: 632; Seidl 1989: 130; Ornan 2005a: 121.

[93] Regarding the circular/oval-shaped elements, rendered by a drill, Ornan (2005a: 122) observes: "The small drillings shown along the candelabra depicted on the seals probably stand for the metal links typical of actual bronze candelabra." Ehrenberg 2000a: nos. 18–20 show very detailed renderings of the stand.

[94] See also below, scheme 1.8, for PFUTS 1655s where a worshipper stands before a *kudurru*-shaped object and a lamp-on-a-stand that rest on a pedestal.

[95] Ornan's (2005a: 122) statement that the lamp-on-a-stand does not occur on a rectangular pedestal is generally accurate, but there are a few seals where, as at Persepolis, the lamp-on-a-stand rests on a pedestal. I have found only one example from the Babylonian archives, from Sippar, dated to Nabonidus year 7 (Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A25). Altavilla and Walker do not identify the object as a lamp-on-a-stand, but one can clearly see the feet of the stand and the stacked oval-shaped elements. There are also a few unprovenanced seals where the lamp-on-a-stand rests on a pedestal (e.g., Buchanan and Moorey 1988: no. 384; Jakob-Rost 1997: no. 256). On one of the seals on the clay tags from Hafudh (Ehrenberg 2000a: 331–332, no. 19)

lamp-on-a-stand does occur; however, it is free-standing (without a pedestal).[96] Only one example of a free-standing lamp-on-a-stand is definitively documented at Persepolis, PFS 1283s (see below, scheme 1.5, Figure 21), a worshipper standing before four styli on a *mušḫuššu* that rests on a pedestal, with a lamp-on-a-stand at right. PFS 143s preserves a version wherein a bird (rooster?) replaces the lamp at the top of a stand (see also below, scheme 1.4).[97]

As discussed above (scheme 1.1, PFUTS 1370*s), PFS 1205*s (Figure 13) carries a Babylonian inscription: ^{d}KASKAL.

Scheme 1.4: worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 2 stamp seals

a. worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 2 seals (Figure 22)

The lamp-on-a-stand alone on a pedestal is unusual in the Late Babylonian archives. Both seals from the PFA, PFATS 446s (Figure 22) and PFUTS 1578s, are executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.

Scheme 1.5: worshipper before marru *and stylus or double-stylus on* mušḫuššu *that rests on pedestal – total 9 stamp seals*

a. worshipper before *marru* and double-stylus with bar on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal: 3 stamp seals (Figures 15 and 23);
b. worshipper before *marru* and double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal: 3 stamp seals (Figure 24);
c. worshipper before *marru* on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal;
d. worshipper before four styli on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 21);
e. worshipper before symbols (exact form cannot be determined owing to preservation) on *mušḫuššu* on pedestal: 1 stamp seal.

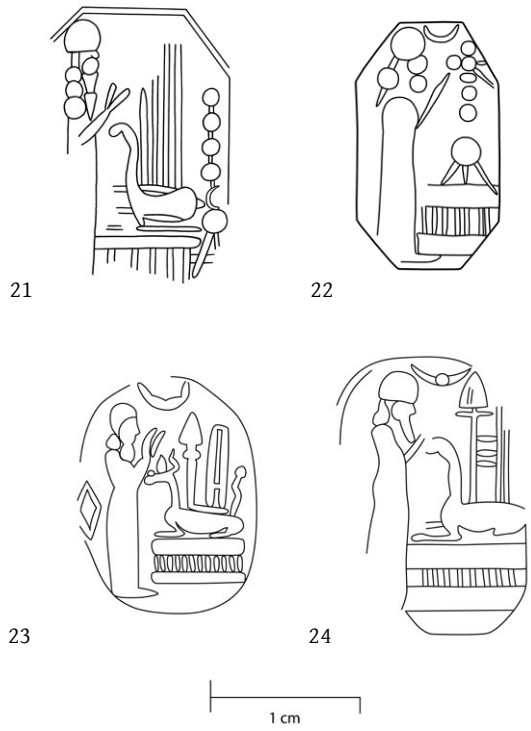

Figure 21. Collated line drawing of PFS 1283s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 22. Collated line drawing of PFATS 446s. Courtesy E.R.M. Dusinberre.
Figure 23. Collated line drawing of PFS 3059s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 24. Collated line drawing of PFS 3138s (M.B. Garrison).

One is struck again by the variety of combinations of symbols even among this relatively small cluster of stamp seals; the defining characteristic is the inclusion of a *mušḫuššu* with various combinations of a *marru* and/or styli.

The *mušḫuššu*, the snake-dragon, has long been recognized as a symbol linked with both Marduk and Nabû; the creature appears commonly in compositional format #1 on seals occurring in the Babylonian archives.[98] At Persepolis, as in the Babylonian archives, the symbols can rest directly on the back of the *mušḫuššu* or on a thin horizontal plinth that rests over its back.[99]

One particularly interesting example from Persepolis is PFS 1283s (Figure 21). There are four vertical elements emerging from a thin horizontal plinth that rests over the back of the *mušḫuššu*; the one closest to the worshipper, generally a *marru*, is here clearly a stylus. The tops of the other three vertical elements are not preserved, but they appear to be styli.[100] To the right

a lamp-on-a-stand rests on one pedestal, a *marru* on a second pedestal. The seals from Hafudh date to the reigns of Darius or, possibly, Xerxes (see above, note 81). Ornan (2005a: 122 note 368) provides citations of principally unprovenanced stamp seals that show a lamp-on-a-stand, but this list includes both scenes where the lamp-on-a-stand rests on a pedestal and where it is free-standing (the majority of scenes). One of these seals is preserved in several beautiful impressions on tablets from the Murašû Archive (= Bregstein 1993: no. 243).

[96] Bregstein 1993: nos. 228–229, 243.

[97] On the rooster as a symbol of Nusku, see Ehrenberg 2002: 55–57; Ornan 2005a: 122. Ehrenberg (2002: 57) notes the remarkable cylinder seal, applied to a tablet dating to the reign of Neriglissar, that shows a worshipper before a crescent resting on a *kudurru* and a lamp on a short stand resting on the back of a rooster (Wunsch 1999-2000: drawing on p. 254 = Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A109 [the authors indicate that the seal occurs on two other tablets of similar date]). One of the seals from Hafudh (Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 21) shows a rooster on a tall stand; another (Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 22 (= nos. 23 and 24) has a rooster on a pedestal (on the tags from Hafudh, see above note 81).

[98] E.g., Ehrenberg 1999: 17, 19, nos. 57–66; Ornan 2005a: 120–121. On the *mušḫuššu*, see Matin 2021, with previous bibliography.

[99] Thin plinth: PFS 1283s (Figure 21) and PFUTS 725s.

[100] Perhaps one of them could be the ram-headed snake; see below, scheme 1.7.

of the pedestal is a lamp-on-a-stand (the top is not preserved) resting not on the pedestal but on the ground line. Another unusual design is PFS 3059s (Figure 23), where the worshipper appears to cup his hands outward (rather than upward). Seals in scheme 1.5 have a very high percentage of divine symbols in the upper field: five have a crescent in the upper field, one has a dot-in-crescent, one has a rhombus, and one has a winged symbol.[101] Stylistically, only one seal, PFS 1283s (Figure 21), among this cluster is executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.

As discussed above, PFS 451*s (Figure 15) carries a Babylonian inscription: ^{d}KASKAL.

Scheme 1.6: worshipper before symbols on bull that rests on pedestal – 2 stamp seals

a. worshipper before lightning bolt on bull that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 25);
b. worshipper before undetermined symbol on bull that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal.

The lightning bolt and bull seen on PFATS 34*s have long-standing associations with the storm-god Adad.[102] The god, while Babylonian in origin, had been worshipped in Elam since the early second millennium BCE.[103] Twelve texts from the PFA concern provisions for offerings to the god.[104] The muted presence of the deity in the visual record at Persepolis is curious.[105]

The theme of a worshipper standing before a bull that rests on a pedestal is very rare in the Babylonian archives.[106] The lightning bolt is more commonly seen, especially in the archives from Babylon, but, with one exception, these scenes occur exclusively on cylinder seals that carry compositional format #2, where the lightning bolts rest on *kudurru*-shaped objects.[107] The

Figure 25. Collated line drawing of PFATS 34*s. Courtesy E.R.M. Dusinberre.

lightning bolt does not occur in the Sippar archives and only once at Uruk.[108] The format of two paired lightning bolts as seen on PFS 289*s (Figure 5) is also rare in Assyria and Babylonia.[109]

Both PFATS 34*s (Figure 25) and PFUTS 60s in scheme 1.6 are cut in a modelled style. PFATS 34*s carries an inscription, what may be a broken ^{d}KASKAL or perhaps only a single sign, DINGIR.

Scheme 1.7: worshipper before symbol(s) on goat-fish that rests on pedestal or plinth – 3 stamp seals

a. worshipper before ram-headed staff on goat-fish that rests on pedestal: 3 stamp seals (Figure 16).

The goat-fish, often identified as Akkadian *ṣuḫurmašu*, and ram-headed staff have long associations with the water god Ea.[110] As Ornan (2005a: 125) observes, the goat-fish is often depicted as the sole element on stamp seal designs. Its occurrence in compositional format #1 on stamp seals is very rare in Babylonia.[111]

[101] Crescent: PFATS 520s, PFS 451*s (Figure 15), PFS 3059s (+rhombus) (Figure 23), PFUTS 725s, PFUTS 1096s. Dot-in-crescent: PFS 3138s (Figure 24) (see also below, PFS 862s, scheme 1.8, Figure 26). PFATS 648s may have a small winged disk in the upper field; the preservation is very poor. PFS 3059s is one of only two seals (see also below PFATS 34*s, Figure 25) wherein a rhombus occurs in the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis (on the rhombus in the Late Babylonian worship scene in the Babylonian archives, see MacGinnis 1995: 172; Ehrenberg 1999: 17–18).

[102] Ebeling 1928: 26; Black and Green 1992: 47 (*s.v.* bull), 110–111 (*s.v.* Iškur), 118 (*s.v.* lightning); Collon 2001: 13; Ornan 2005a: 23–25, 28, 43, 63, 100, 113, 128, 146, 170; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 115. See also below, scheme 1.8, PFS 289*s (Figure 5), where a worshipper stands before a lightning bolt on a *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal, and scheme 3.2, where a worshipper stands before a lightning bolt on bull that rests on a plinth.

[103] Henkelman (2008: 308–311) surveys the evidence for the worship of the god in Elam.

[104] Henkelman 2008: 305–351; Henkelman 2021b: 1229–1230.

[105] See also below, PFS 518 (Figure 28), scheme 3.2.

[106] Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. B152 (a cylinder seal, from Babylon). There is one example among the seals on the clay tags from Hafudh (Ehrenberg 2000a: nos. 25–26).

[107] Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A118, A125, A133, A140, A142, A150, A155, A156, A162, A172 (perhaps on *kudurru*-shaped object), A173, A175, B118, B127, B128. Variants: Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A107 (lightning bolt rests on thin plinth), A124 (lightning bolt floats in field), B167 (lightning bolt rests on pedestal?); no. B201, a stamp seal in compositional format #1, has a *marru*, double-stylus, and lightning bolt on the back of a *mušḫuššu* resting on a pedestal.

[108] Ehrenberg 1999: no. 102 (cylinder seal with compositional format #2, lightning bolts resting on a *kudurru*-shaped object).

[109] Collon 2001: no. 283. The lightning bolt on PFS 289*s (below, scheme 1.8, Figure 5) is similarly rendered.

[110] Black and Green 1992: 75 (*s.v.* Enki [Ea]), 93 (*s.v.* goat-fish), 169 (*s.v.* standards, staves and sceptres of the gods); Ornan 2005a: 125–27. For the goat-fish depicted on cylinder seals, see below, scheme 3.2, PFS 1240* (Figure 12), PFS 2163, and PFUTS 1437.

[111] Ehrenberg 1999: 64, no. 75 (with comparanda); Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A316 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 416d [they state that the tablet is from Sippar]), a goat-fish rests on a thin plinth, a beautifully carved seal; Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A334 = GGF205 (= Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 599, from Borsippa), a goat-fish rests on a thin plinth, on a tablet dated to Alexander or later;

Of the stamp seals in this scheme from Persepolis, PFS 1216*s (Figure 16) stands out. The carving is detailed and well-modelled, and the seal carries an inscription, ^{d}KASKAL.

Scheme 1.8: worshipper before symbol on kudurru-shaped object that rests on pedestal – total 6 stamp seals

a. worshipper before dot-in-crescent on *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 26);
b. worshipper before lightning bolt on *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 5);
c. worshipper before undetermined symbol (crescent?) on *kudurru*-shaped object and lamp-on-a-stand that rest on pedestal: 1 stamp seal;
d. worshipper before crescent on *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal (Figure 27);
e. worshipper before undetermined symbol on *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 2 stamp seals.

For various reasons, these six designs are outliers, but several of them have quite exceptional designs; and all seven seals in scheme 1.8 are carved in various modelled styles (rather than a cut-and-drilled style), a notable feature of this cluster of seals.

In the Babylonian archives, worshippers who stand before symbols that rest on *kudurru*-shaped objects are very rarely found on stamp seals.[112] As noted above, more commonly these *kudurru*-shaped objects occur in elaborate worship scenes on large and richly carved cylinder seals.[113]

The worshipper on PFS 862s (Figure 26) has both arms depicted and holds a small vase with globular body and long thin neck (sometimes called a bottle). Worshippers holding similar vessels are, as far as I can tell, only encountered in worship scenes on large cylinder seals in the Babylonian archives; in all instances, the worshippers are bald and beardless.[114] The beard and mass of hair at the back of the neck on the worshipper on PFS 862s thus makes the scene even more notable. The dot-in-crescent seen on PFS 862s is encountered in a variety of scene types in the glyptic from the PFA; PFS 862s, PFS 3138s (Figure 24), and, perhaps, PFS 1414s are the only securely identified examples of it among the Late Babylonian worship scenes at Persepolis.[115]

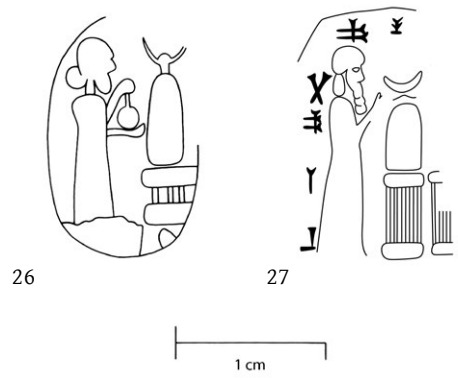

Figure 26. Collated line drawing of PFS 862s (M.B. Garrison).
Figure 27. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 1218*s (M.B. Garrison).

The pairing of a symbol on a *kudurru*-shaped object and a lamp-on-a-stand that rest on a pedestal, as we see on PFUTS 1655s (the divine symbol on the *kudurru*-shaped object may be a crescent), is not attested in the Late Babylonian archives.

PFS 289*s (Figure 5) is a large oval-shaped stamp seal. The worshipper appears to be bald and beardless. His garment carries elaborate decoration on both the chest and over the legs. Two pairs of lightning bolts zig-zag upward from a *kudurru*-shaped object that rests on a pedestal. The *kudurru*-shaped object has a decorative panel. The pedestal is rather elaborate: it has many small vertical striations, the feet are articulated, and the upper horizontal surface carries up-turned ends. In the upper field is, apparently, a small winged disk.

The worshipper on PFS 289*s (Figure 5) is the only unambiguously attested bald and beardless worshipper in the glyptic from the PFA.[116] This fact stands in stark

Ehrenberg 2000a: nos. 14, 15 and 16–17, goat-fish resting on plinths, from Hafudh. See also below, scheme 3.2.

[112] For other examples of worshippers who stand before *kudurru*-shaped objects on stamp seals, see Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 78–80; Altavilla and Walker 2009: 153, no. A39; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 116–117, nos. A305, A314, B203 and B207.

[113] See the discussion above, p. 481–482.

[114] E.g., Ehrenberg 1999: no. 143 (with unprovenanced comparanda); Altavilla and Walker 2009: nos. A10, A27, A49, A60, B05, B08 (beautiful impression where one can see details of the bottle), B20; Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A140, A152, A157, A159, A183, A195, A197, A224, B144, B150, B155, B163. MacGinnis (1995: 173) states that the bottle probably held beer as an offering to the deities. The specific combination of bald and beardless worshipper with this distinctive type of vessel clearly marks a specific ritual context. As discussed, cylinder seals that show a bald and beardless worshipper before a series of symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals are often said to depict priests and to identify the seal-user as a priest (e.g., MacGinnis 1995: 170; Ehrenberg 1999: 15; Collon 2001: 193; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 113, 119). See Waerzeggers (2008) on the *gullubu* ('to shave') ritual induction of priests in Babylonia. Ehrenberg (2000b: 316–317) states that scenes showing a bald and beardless worshipper holding this distinctive vessel occur only in the Achaemenid period; see, however, Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A49 (Amel-Marduk year 1).

[115] PFS 1414s may have a dot-in-crescent.

[116] There are a few examples of male figures who appear to be beardless but have hair at the back of their heads: PFS 2117*, a spectacular worship scene involving a winged symbol and stylized tree; PFS 813* (discussed below, scheme 3.1, Figure 17); PFUTS 110s

contrast with the worship scenes in the Babylonian archives where such worshippers are commonly encountered, but principally in compositional format #2 on large cylinder seals.[117] The lack of bald and beardless worshippers clearly distinguishes Persepolitan imagery from Babylonian.[118]

As discussed above (scheme 1.6), the lightning bolt is a symbol of the god Adad. Only two other seals from the PFA carry lightning bolts, PFATS 34*s (see above, scheme 1.6, Figure 25) and the cylinder seal PFS 518 (see below, scheme 3.1, Figure 28).

Given the rarity of inscribed seals at Persepolis, it is noteworthy that two of these six seals in scheme 1.8, PFS 289*s (Figure 5) and PFUTS 1218*s (Figure 27), carry similar Babylonian inscriptions, free-floating in the field at left:

PFS 289*s reads: ^{d}PA [PAP] ⌜ZI x⌝
PFUTS 1218*s reads: ⌜^{d}⌝PA PAP ⌜ZI TIN BA⌝

The restoration of the missing and broken signs is based upon four other Persepolitan seals that carry similar inscriptions as well as many attestations of the inscription (or slightly expanded versions) on seals from Assyria and Babylonia (see Appendix 3a).[119] The "core" inscription may be either ^{d}PA PAP ZI or ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*.[120] Both versions of the inscription are understood to be invocations; the signs are logograms conventionally transcribed as *Nabû-uṣur-napištī* (short version), 'O Nabû, protect my life!,' and *Nabû uṣur napištī balāṭa qīš*(*a*) (long version), 'Nabû, protect my life, grant (me) health.'[121] The long version can be embedded into more extended inscriptions consisting of, e.g., the name and patronym of the seal-owner. Seven seals from Babylonian archives carry what appears to be an abbreviated version of the formula: ^{d}PA. PFATS 34*s and two seals preserved on the clay tags said to be from Hafudh may have inscriptions consisting of a single DINGIR.[122]

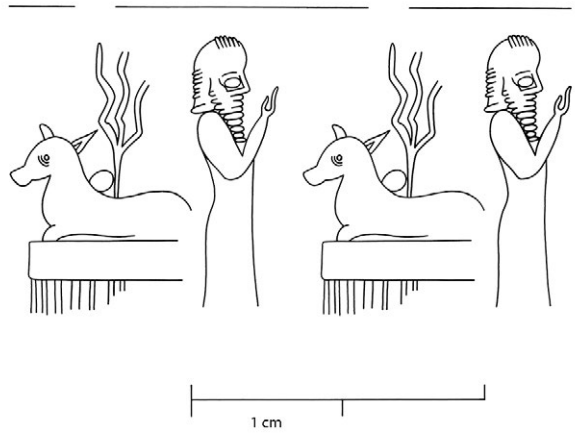

Figure 28. Collated line drawing of PFS 518 (M.B. Garrison).

The short and long versions of the inscription are well-attested in both Assyrian and Babylonian glyptic, appearing on both stamp and cylinder seals (Appendices 3a and 3b).[123] As is often the case, there is an interesting distinction between unprovenanced seals in museum collections and seals preserved as impressions on clay legal, economic, and administrative documents. The surviving seals that carry some version of this inscription are all unprovenanced, cylinder seals (with two exceptions), and only rarely have scenes of worship, preferring heroic encounters, either the control type (animals/creatures to either side of the hero) or combat (hero grappling with an animal/creature).[124] The

(see Garrison 2017: 31, 117, 125–127, 135, 139, 141, 171, 173, 177, 226, 243, 245, 248, 273, 294; pl. 2).

117 Ehrenberg 1999: 15–16, 18–19, 22, 24–25; Altavilla and Walker 2009: 153; Altavilla and Walker 2016: 113.

118 See above, notes 56 and 114, on baldness and beardlessness as attributes of priests.

119 On Appendices 3 and 4, see the comments above, note 82. The six attestations of the inscription ^{d}PA PA ZI (and variants) at Persepolis are: PFS 108*, PFS 289*s, PFS 1632*, PFUTS 219*, PFUTS 1218*s and PFUTS 1254*. PFATS 34*s has a broken inscription that appears to read: ⌜d⌝[...]. On the abbreviated version of this inscription formula, ^{d}PA, see below, note 122.

120 Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 206, 211) consider the expanded version, ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*, to be the basic formula, with ^{d}PA PAP ZI functioning as a shorted version.

121 See Ehrenberg 1999: 19, "O Nabû, preserve my existence." Note the comments of Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 206: ^{AN}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* "became so popular in the First Millennium BCE Babylonia that it might be called standard."

122 Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 211) suggest that the abbreviated version, ^{d}PA, indicates that the seals may "have not been incised completely." See Appendices 3a and 3b for citations of the specific seals that carry either ^{d}PA or simply a DINGIR.

123 As with ^{d}KASKAL, ^{d}PA PAP ZI and ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* (and variants) apparently occur only on seals (both stamp and cylinder seals). Not surprisingly, the abbreviated version, ^{d}PA, occurs, with one possible exception (Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. B27), only on stamp seals. A total of 58 seals are included in Appendix 3a; the readings of a few of these inscriptions are uncertain owing to poor preservation.

124 The worship scenes include: von der Osten (1936: no. 132), compositional format #2, worshipper before symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals; Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: figs. 1–2), a worshipper before a tall pedestal on which there is a star (apparently additional figures have been added at a later date); Porada 1948: no. 795 (compositional format #1); Moortgat (1940: no. 607) and Wittmann (1992: no. 114), winged attendants flanking a stylized tree (only one of the attendants on Wittmann [1992: no. 114] is winged). The two stamp seals are Porada 1948: no. 795 (compositional format #1) and Delaporte 1920: pl. 54 no. 13 (D.82) (heroic combat). Delaporte 1920: pls. 52 no. 14 (D83) and 54 no. 13 (D.82) (= Watanabe 1995: nos. 1.13 and 1.15) are from the Collection Dieulafoy in the Louvre, and thus their exact archaeological provenance, perhaps Susa, is uncertain (Dieulafoy [1893: 438] stated that almost all the seals were brought to him on a piecemeal basis by his workers rather than having been excavated under somewhat controlled conditions). Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 210) attribute von der Osten (1936: no. 132) to the site of Cutha based upon the contents of the inscription; in fact, the seal is unprovenanced. In total, Appendices 3a/3b (^{d}PA PAP ZI [and variants]) contain 17 actual seals, 15 cylinder seals and two stamp seals. With the exception of Collon (2001: no. 320), the inscriptions are cut so as to be read in the stone. In contrast, of the 41 seals that survive only as impressions in Appendices 3a/3b, 32 have inscriptions that are cut so as to be read in impression (in three

seals preserved as impressions in archives occur most commonly at Babylon, Persepolis, and Uruk; Sippar and Borsippa are less well represented. At Babylon, with one exception (Graziani 1989: no. 21), the seals that carry some version of this inscription are cylinders and, where well enough preserved to make a judgment, have compositional format #2. At Uruk, on the contrary, the inscription occurs only on stamp seals almost all of which carry compositional format #1; moreover, with two exceptions, the seals from Uruk employ the short version of the inscription: ^{d}PA PAB ZI.[125] Sippar has only three seals, two cylinders and one stamp seal, and their inscriptions appear to be the abbreviated version, ^{d}PA. One of the cylinder seals from Sippar carries a heroic encounter, the other compositional format #2.[126]

Three cylinder seals from Borsippa employ the long formula of the inscription and add to the end ^{d}KASKAL: ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* ^{d}KASKAL.[127] In two, and perhaps all three, instances, the KASKAL logogram has been modified by additional sign(s); Klengel-Brandt (1969: 332) suggests the overwritten components are MIN plus some other sign.[128] On two of the seals, the KASKAL logogram has been overwritten by two vertical wedges; at right are four pairs of winkelhakens.[129] These two seals with the overwritten KASKAL logogram occur on tablets dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I.[130] To these seals should be added a cylinder seal from Babylon carrying ^{d}KASKAL alone, where the KASKAL logogram likewise has been modified; in this case there are four pairs of winkelhakens to the right of the KASKAL logogram.[131] This cylinder seal from Babylon likewise dates to the reign of Artaxerxes I. The two cylinder seals occurring on tablets dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I from Borsippa (Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1–2) are very similar in: carrying compositional format #2; having a crescent and star-in-disk on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals; having a small table immediately before the worshipper; disposing the inscription in two lines between the first *kudurru*-shaped object resting on a pedestal and the table (line 1) and the table and the worshipper (line 2); having the worshipper hold a stylus. This last feature, the worshipper holding a stylus, is quite unusual. The cylinder from Babylon (Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3) dating to Artaxerxes I, but having only the augmented ^{d}KASKAL, likewise carries compositional format #2 with a crescent and star-in-disk on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals, but there is a winged scorpion-man at right, and the worshipper does not hold a stylus but simply raises his arm with palm upturned.

How exactly one understands both the addition of ^{d}KASKAL to the formula ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* and the "overwritten/augmented" versions of ^{d}KASKAL is unclear.[132] Perhaps we have to do here with a very peculiar (late?) scribal tradition limited to Babylon/Borsippa.[133]

instances the orientation of the inscriptions is questionable), nine have inscriptions cut so as to be read in the stone. In total, Appendices 2a/2b (^{d}KASKAL) contain only three actual seals, in each case a stamp seal. The inscriptions on two of the stamp seals are cut so as to be read in impression; the orientation of the inscription on the third stamp seal cannot be determined. Of the 34 seals that survive only as impressions in Appendices 2a/2b, the inscriptions on 21 seals are cut so as to be read in impression; two seals have inscriptions that are cut to be read in the stone; on 11 seals the orientation of the inscription cannot be established. This phenomenon, i.e., surviving actual seals having inscriptions cut so as to be read in the stone as opposed to seals preserved only as impressions having inscriptions cut so as to be read in impression in glyptic of Late Babylonian and Achaemenid periods, has often been overlooked (but cf. Reiche and Sandowicz [2009: 205 note 57], with whom we concur that the issue needs further study). Collon (2001: 17), as other commentators who focus principally on unprovenanced seals in museum collections, appears to conclude that cuneiform inscriptions cut in the positive on Assyrian and Babylonian seals indicate that the primary function of the seals themselves was decorative rather than administrative/economic.

[125] The exceptions are Ehrenberg 1999: no. 44, which employs the long version: [^{d}PA PAB] ⌜ZI⌝ TIN ⌜BA⌝, and Ehrenberg 1999: no. 80, which appears to carry only ^{d}PA.

[126] The stamp seal (Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 523) shows a worshipper with bucket.

[127] Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1–2 (= Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A193 and A194); Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 8 (= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A139). Balzer (2007: chpt. 16, 33, no. H8abg.10) identifies the impression of a seal on a tablet (now lost and preserved at the British Museum in casts) published by Menant (1880: 40–41, fig. 51) as a separate seal from Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1 (= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A193). The scenes are certainly very similar; the drawing published in Menant (1880: fig. 51) is rather poor, and there are apparently gaps in the preservation of the impression. Balzer (2007: chpt. 16, 33) reads the inscription: [^{d}]PA PAP [ZI] x / x x x. There are no traces of a second line in the drawing published in Menant (1880: fig. 51), but the drawing does not inspire confidence. The issue is made more complicated by the fact that Balzer (via Menant) states that the tablet is dated to Darius year 7. Altavilla and Walker (2016: 49, *s.v.* tablet numbers 218 [68456] and 219 [68457]) state that this lost tablet is from Borsippa, is part of the Kasr archive, and dates to "Artaxerxes I 26/11/26?". In the end, one would need to examine all the impressions in person to make a judgment on this problem. Given the unusual nature of the scene and inscription, I have opted to follow Altavilla and Walker's (2016) accounting of the evidence.

[128] According to Altavilla and Walker (2016: 130), Baker and Wunsch (2001: fig. 8) "gives an incomplete copy of ^{d}DUḪ.DUḪ." Note that Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 209) read ^{d}KASKAL?. We may leave open the possibility that the KASKAL sign has been modified, but see also below, note 133. Klengel–Brandt (1969: 332) was unable to offer a coherent reading of the overwritten ^{d}KASKAL: "Die zweite Zeile enthält einen Gotternamen, wie durch das Determinativ angezeigt wird, seine Deutung ist mir leider nicht gelungen. Es könnte sich um das Zeichen KASKAL mit MIN und einem weiteren Zusatz handeln, doch konnte ich keinen in spätbabylonischer Zeit verehrten Gott ausmachen, der auf diese Weise geschrieben wird" (I read her comments to apply to both ^{d}KASKAL on its own as well as the overwritten version on these three seals).

[129] Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1–2.

[130] The third seal from Borsippa (Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 8 [= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A139]) occurs on tablets dating from Cyrus year 6 to Cambyses year 4.

[131] Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3.

[132] See the discussion above and Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 211–212 note 82).

[133] Ehrenberg (2000b: 317–319) stresses the "lack of uniformity in sealing practice throughout Babylonia," with local preferences expressed in seal format, composition, and iconography among the Babylonian archives from the Late Babylonian period into the reign of Darius. The third cylinder seal from Borsippa that may have a modified KASKAL (Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 8 [= Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A139]) is something of an outlier. It occurs on tablets

The addition of ^{d}KASKAL to the formula ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* also brings us back to the issue of how we understand ^{d}KASKAL when it occurs alone, generally on stamp seals that carry some version of compositional format #1.[134] Certainly the two inscriptional formulae, ^{d}KASKAL (alone) and ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants), are closely linked, both in their potential functions/semantics and frequent appearance with the Late Babylonian worship scene. Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 206) state that ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants) "became popular" in the late 8th and early 7th centuries BCE, becoming less frequent in the Achaemenid period. This observation was based principally on the unprovenanced Assyro-Babylonian seals collected by Watanabe (1995). The existing provenanced and dated evidence collected in Appendices 2b and 3b provides a little more nuance to the issue.[135] If we exclude the unprovenanced seals, the earliest attestation of the inscriptional formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants) would appear to be Watanabe (1993: no. 10.1 = Herbordt 1992: Nrd 135), which occurs on a jar sealing from room S.E. 8 at Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud (Appendix 3b). A terminus ante quem is provided by the archaeological context, the destruction of Nimrud in 612 BCE.[136] The design, only partially preserved, is a very curious one, a figure in winged device on top of a columnar support that rests on the back of a winged creature marchant. The composition evokes the famous scenes of gods on the backs of animals/creatures in a series of monumental rock-cut reliefs in northern Assyria associated with the Assyrian canal system and generally dated to the reign of Sennacherib (705–681 BCE).[137] The seal may, accordingly, date to the reign of Sennacherib. Thereafter, the great majority of the securely provenanced and dated seals that carry some version of the formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI clearly occur on tablets that post-date the reign of Nabonidus (Table 1).

Attempts to consider the unprovenanced seals collected by Watanabe (1995) are complicated by the difficulty of dating them.[138] While we could assign them generally to the Neo-Assyrian–Late Babylonian periods, given the propensity for archaism in the glyptic from the PFA, and, indeed, in the Babylonian archives, one would have to leave open the possibility that some of these unprovenanced seals could in fact date in the reign of Cyrus or later.[139] If, following Watanabe (1995), we classify these unprovenanced seals as "Neo-Babylonian," we get a fairly equal distribution of seals pre- and post-539 BCE. The relatively large number of cylinder seals that carry some version of the formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI, consistent across time, stands in sharp contrast to the seals that carry ^{d}KASKAL, almost all of which are stamp seals and date to the reign of Darius I or later (see below and Appendix 2b).

The issue of provenanced versus unprovenanced evidence is less taxing with the seals that carry the inscription ^{d}KASKAL, since Appendix 2a and 2b include only two unprovenanced seals.[140] Appendix 2b shows that there are only three seals that occur on tablets pre-dating the reign of Darius I. ^{d}KASKAL is, thus, an almost exclusively Achaemenid phenomenon; moreover, on the provenanced evidence, the inscription occurs, with only five exceptions, on stamp seals (Table 2).

Table 1. Provenanced seals that carry ^{d}PA PAP ZI (or variants)

Chronology	Cylinder Seals	Stamp Seals
Late Assyrian	1 cylinder seal	–
Neriglissar	1 cylinder seal	–
Nabonidus	3 cylinder seals	2 stamp seals
ca. 550 Susa	1 cylinder seal	–
Cyrus	2 cylinder seals	3 stamp seals
Cambyses	1 cylinder seal	1 stamp seal
Darius I	6 cylinder seals	7 stamp seals
Artaxerxes I	3 cylinder seals	–
Darius II/III	1 cylinder seal	–
Late Babylonian–Achaemenid	–	4 stamp seals
Achaemenid	1 cylinder seal	3 stamp seals
Seleucid	–	1 ring seal
TOTAL	20 cylinder seals	21 stamp seals

dating to the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses and the imagery consists solely of a worshipper holding a bucket.

[134] On ^{d}KASKAL, see the discussion above, p. 489–491.

[135] I include in Appendices 3a and 3b those seals that apparently carry only ^{d}PA or a single DINGIR.

[136] Parker 1962: 26–27.

[137] See, e.g., Boehmer 1975; Kreppner 2002; Ornan 2007; Fales 2015 and 2017. Garrison and Petersen (in press) have recently reviewed the scholarship.

[138] See above, note 52, for scholarship on defining and dating glyptic carving styles in the Neo-Assyrian and Late Babylonian periods. The tally of seals in Table 1 includes the important collection of clay tags in the Yale Babylonian Collection (Ehrenberg [2000a]), considered as provenanced (Hafudh) and dating most likely to the reign of Darius I (leaving open the possibility that they may date into the reign of Xerxes). The tally of seals in Table 1 does not include the cylinder seals Delaporte 1920: pl. 52, no. 14 (D.83) and pl. 54, no. 13 (D.82), belonging to the Collection Dieulafoy, discovered at Susa or purchased by Dieulafoy at Baghdad (see Watanabe 1995: no. 1.15).

[139] Watanabe (1995), following Wittmann, classified the seals as Neo-Babylonian. This is not the venue to examine each of these seals in detail. Watanabe (1995: nos. 1.1, 1.13, 1.15) could conceivably date post 539 BCE.

[140] See the comments above, note 138, concerning the clay tags from Hafudh; the seals on these tags have been included in Table 2.

Table 2. Provenanced seals that carry ^{d}KASKAL inscription

Chronology	Cylinder Seals	Stamp Seals
Neriglissar	–	1 stamp seal
Cambyses	–	2 stamp seals
Darius I	3 cylinder seals	20 stamp seals
Artaxerxes I	1 cylinder seal	–
Darius II	–	5 stamp seals
Artaxerxes II/III	–	1 stamp seal
Late Baby.–Achaemenid	1 cylinder seal	1 stamp seal
TOTAL	5 cylinder seals	30 stamp seals

The majority of seals that carry the inscriptional formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants) thus occur on tablets dated to the reign of Darius and earlier (Appendix 3b); the formula does continue, however, into the Late Achaemenid and Seleucid periods. Seals that carry the inscriptional formula ^{d}PA PAP ZI (and variants) occur on both cylinder and stamp seals, with no apparent meaningful changes in percentages through time. In contrast, seals that carry the inscriptional formula ^{d}KASKAL occur, with only three exceptions, on tablets dated to the reign of Darius or later (Appendix 2b). Seals that carry the inscriptional formula ^{d}KASKAL are, with only five exceptions, stamp seals. Both data sets indicate a hiatus in the reign of Xerxes, reflecting the "end-of-archives."[141]

At Persepolis, the two formulae, ^{d}KASKAL (alone) and ^{d}PA PAB ZI (and variants), are fairly equally attested: ^{d}KASKAL occurs on seven seals; ^{d}PA PAB ZI (and variants) on six seals; one seal, PFATS 34*s, may carry one of the abbreviated versions ^{d}PA or simply DINGIR.[142] It may only be a coincidence, but the number of attestations of the two inscriptional formulae at Persepolis would appear to reflect the general chronological trends observed above; i.e., Persepolis reflects a moment in time and space when the earlier formula, ^{d}PA PAB ZI (and variants) is still popular, but the later formula, ^{d}KASKAL, has now a more pronounced footprint in the inscriptional landscape. Thereafter, ^{d}KASKAL appears to become, for the most part, the preferred formula among the two, at least in Babylonia.[143]

The six seals that carry some version of the formula ^{d}PA PAB ZI at Persepolis include both stamp and cylinder seals. Four of the seals from Persepolis are cylinders, none of which show scenes of worship: PFS 108* (heraldic winged human-faced bull creatures); PFUTS 1254* and PFUTS 219* (both heroic encounters, control type); PFS 1632* (heroic encounter, combat type).[144] The two stamp seals, PFS 289*s (Figure 5) and PFUTS 1218*s (Figure 27), both carry very rare versions of compositional format #1, a worshipper before a symbol on a *kudurru*-shaped object (see above, scheme 1.8).

Scheme 1.9: two worshippers disposed to either side of symbol(s) – total 4 stamp seals

a. two worshippers disposed to either side of *marru* and double-stylus that rest on series of superimposed thin plinths: 1 stamp seal;
b. two worshippers disposed to either side of *marru* displayed in U-shaped frame: 1 stamp seal (Figure 29);
c. two worshippers disposed to either side of *marru*: 1 stamp seal;
d. two worshippers disposed to either side of stand/altar: 1 stamp seal (Figure 14).

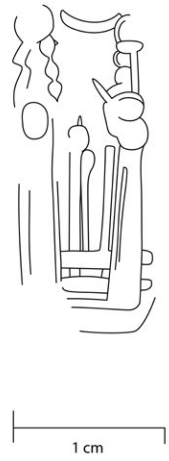

Figure 29. Collated line drawing of PFS 3064s (M.B. Garrison).

[141] See Waerzeggers 2003–2004 and 2018.
[142] We omit PFS 1228*s given the uncertainty of the reading of the inscription.
[143] It is curious that at the Eanna at Uruk, which (like the Ebabbar at Sippar) partially overlaps in date the PFA, there are no attestations of ^{d}KASKAL. One wonders whether the cessation of sealed tablets in the Eanna archive in Darius year 22 month 4 (500 BCE) plays a role in this phenomenon. Waerzeggers (2018: 121) also indicates that the great bulk of the approximately 8,000 tablets attributed to the Eanna archive pre-date Darius year 2. Of the 167 sealed tablets from Eanna published by Ehrenberg (1999), 54 (approximately 32%) pre-date Darius year 2, 16 (approximately 10%) date to the reign of Darius I or are classified "early Achaemenid." One of these 16 texts dates to Darius year 2, the other 13 dated texts occur in Darius years 11, 12, 16 and 19. The record of sealed tablets from Eanna thus does not reflect the situation in the Eanna archive as a whole. As noted, Altavilla and Walker (2016: no. A304) identify a stamp seal that carries ^{d}KASKAL on a tablet from Uruk (archive not identified) dating to Neriglissar, the earliest attestation of the formula. In the Murašû Archive at Nippur, dating to the second half of the 5th century BCE (and thus some 50 years after the PFA), only ^{d}KASKAL occurs.
[144] Cf. the cylinders from Babylon that carry some version of the formula ^{d}PA PAB ZI; all carry variations of compositional format #2.

Formally, this scheme is really a separate phenomenon from compositional format #1, but its visual dynamics are closely linked to that format; therefore, I have opted to include the seals in this analysis. The nature and method of display of the divine symbol(s) is distinct in each of the four seals. PFS 3064s (Figure 29) may be the most intriguing with a single (or, perhaps, double-) *marru* placed within a U-shaped frame. I include with this small group PFS 161*s (Figure 14), mentioned above in association with the inscriptional format ^{d}KASKAL, although the object between the two worshippers does not appear to be a divine symbol proper. The worshippers flank a stand topped by a triangular-shaped element (altar?). It seems significant that three of the four seals, PFS 3064s, PFUTS 504s, and PFUTS 1424s, are executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style, while PFS 161*s, which carries an inscription, is cut in a modelled style.

As far as I can discern, this particular scheme of two worshippers flanking a divine symbol on a stamp seal is not found in the Babylonian archives.[145]

Scheme 1.10: marru *and/or stylus alone – total 6 stamp seals*

a. *marru* and stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal;
b. *marru* and double-stylus on *pedestal*: 2 stamp seals;
c. *marru* and double-stylus on *mušḫuššu*: 1 stamp seal (Figure 30);
d. *marru* and double-stylus: 1 stamp seal (Figure 31);
e. *marru*-like symbol: 1 stamp seal.

I include this interesting cluster of stamp seals that show only the *marru* and stylus or the *marru* alone (i.e., without a worshipper). These designs are simple but quite evocative. PFUTS 812s (Figure 31) shows a *marru* and double-stylus without a pedestal or plinth. PFATS 385s (Figure 30) has a very rare scene, a *marru* and a double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* but without a worshipper. To the left there appears to be yet another set of *marru* and double-stylus with bar, although the preservation is poor.

The depiction of divine symbols in isolation or in combination on small stamp seals is well documented in Assyrian glyptic of the 1st millennium BCE.[146] Most

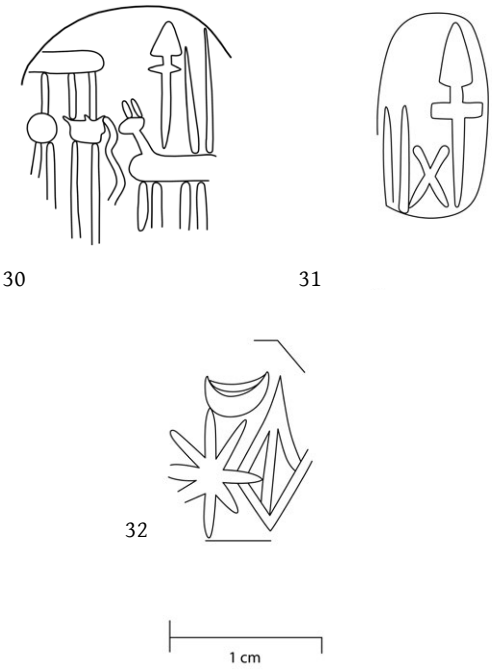

Figure 30. Collated line drawing of PFATS 385s. Courtesy E.R.M. Dusinberre.

Figure 31. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 812s (M.B. Garrison).

Figure 32. Collated line drawing of PFS 237s (M.B. Garrison).

often, the symbols are the crescent (in various forms), star, winged symbol, and/or rosette; these symbols can occur alone or in various combinations.[147] These designs are, however, almost never attested in the Late Babylonian archives, marking an important distinction between Assyrian and Babylonian glyptic.[148] The isolated *marru* and stylus are rarely encountered in either Assyrian or Babylonian glyptic.[149] Scheme 1.10, seals

[145] I omit from consideration worshippers flanking a stylized tree, which is abundantly attested in Assyria, Babylonia, and Persepolis. For unprovenanced seals showing two worshippers flanking a divine symbol, see: Buchanan and Moorey 1988: no. 380, worshippers flanking a *marru* and double-stylus on a thin plinth with winged symbol above; no. 381, worshippers flanking stylus on a thin plinth with crescent above; von der Osten 1934: nos. 472–473, worshippers flanking a *marru*. All four seals are executed in an abstract cut-and-drilled style.

[146] E.g., Fügert 2015: nos. 323–341, 350–353, 409 (star), 340–349 (rosette), 359–316 (crescent on a stand), 362 (winged symbol), 366–404 (various combinations of two/three symbols); Klengel-Brandt 2014: nos. 75–77, 386B, (star), 80, 389–390 (rosette), 70, 316C, 367–370, 373–377, Ist 8 (crescent, principally on a stand), 91, 302A, 327B, 352 (winged symbol), 72–73, 99, 351, 353–358, 365, 371–372, 387–380, Ist 17, Ist 32, Ist 37, Ist 45 (various combinations of two/three symbols); Herbordt 1992: pl. 11 nos. 1–4 (star), 5–12 (rosette), pl. 10 nos. 14–15, 21–22 (crescent on a stand), 23–28 (winged symbol), 1–13, 16–20, 29–32, 34–37 (various combinations of two/three symbols). See Ornan 2005a: 147–167.

[147] On these symbols, see, e.g., Seidl 1971: 485; Ornan 2005a: 151–153, 163–167. I omit from consideration for the moment two substantial thematic categories that may represent the divine: plant imagery; single animals/creatures. So, too, I do not address here the partial figure in the crescent, which is very popular on stamp seals.

[148] When such designs are encountered, they appear on tablets post-dating the reign of Cyrus: Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 374 (winged symbol, from Babylon, dated to reign of Cambyses); Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. K209 (rosette, from Babylon[?]; dated to Alexander IV [?]). In the Late Babylonian period in the Eanna at Uruk, two small stamp seals have a double lion-headed standard (Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 1 [= nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11] and 4 [= no. 11]); two cylinder seals carry a double lion-headed standard, but with a worshipper present (Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 12 [= nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18] and 19). Ehrenberg (1999: 14–15) associates the double lion-headed standard with Ištar.

[149] Fügert 2015: no. 407 (with comparanda); Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. K219 (*marru* alone, according to the description [there is no illustration], on a tablet dated to Alexander IV[?]).

that show the *marru* and stylus alone, would appear to mark a glyptic convention that exists in neither Assyria nor Babylonia. The Persepolitan evidence thus again provides some surprises. Persepolis has also yielded some 13 seals that perpetuate the Assyrian visual tradition of divine symbols such as the star, winged disk, etc., in isolation or in combinations on stamp seals (e.g., PFS 237s [Figure 32]). While the total number of seals is relatively small (given the enormous corpus at Persepolis), their appearance is significant and probably marks yet another Persepolitan re-vitalization of earlier Assyrian glyptic traditions.

X. Compositional format #2 at Persepolis

There is only one cylinder seal from Persepolis that may preserve a worshipper standing before one or more *kudurru*-shaped objects.

Scheme 2.1. worshipper before divine symbols on kudurru-shaped objects that rest on pedestals – total 1 cylinder seal

PFUTS 1618 (Figures 33-34) occurs in three fragmented impressions on PFUT 1421–251; we recover only two *kudurru*-shaped objects resting on pedestals (the worshipper is not preserved). The *kudurru*-shaped object at left appears to support a star; the divine symbol on the *kudurru*-shaped object at right is not preserved. The seal is applied in a very unusual manner, one reminiscent of a common method in Babylonia of applying a cylinder seal that carries compositional format #2 as if a stamp seal, usually focusing on the worshipper.[150] PFUTS 1618 is applied three times on the relatively small surface of the obverse of PFUT 1421-251 (Figure 34). The most prominent application is what appears to be a rolling of the seal that captures two *kudurru*-shaped objects on pedestals; no divine symbols are preserved in this rolling. To the right, a second application of the seal is a small impression, but here it has been stamped (at approximately a 45º angle to the partial rolling). This impression shows only a single star resting on a *kudurru*-shaped object. A third application of the seal is another small impression wherein the cylinder has been pressed as a stamp, again showing only a single star resting on a *kudurru*-shaped object. This impression of the seal is to the upper right of the partial rolling, applied inverted at a 45º angle to the partial rolling. The star in this third impression overlaps the second *kudurru*-shaped object in the partial rolling of the seal.

Given the importance of compositional format #2 within glyptic in the Babylonian archives, and given the large number of stamp seals that perpetuate compositional format 1# at Persepolis, the almost complete absence of a worshipper before *kudurru*-shaped objects on cylinder seals at Persepolis seems hardly fortuitous. As noted above, this scheme, often executed in a deep modelled style on large cylinder seals in Babylonia, seems to code something important in Babylonia. Whatever the significance of this compositional format, and perhaps in the end it does have some special connection to Babylonian priesthood, it apparently has no currency at Persepolis.[151]

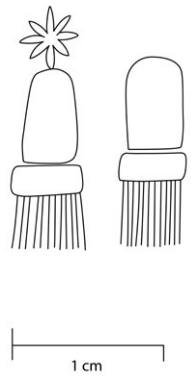

Figure 33. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 1618 (M.B. Garrison).

Figure 34. PFUTS 1618 applied three times on the obverse of PFUT 1421–251 (M.B. Garrison).

[150] See above, pp. 489–491.

[151] The distinction appears to be spatial, not chronological, since many examples of compositional format #2 occur on tablets dating to the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius I in Babylonia (e.g., Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 104, 105, 142, 143 and 144).

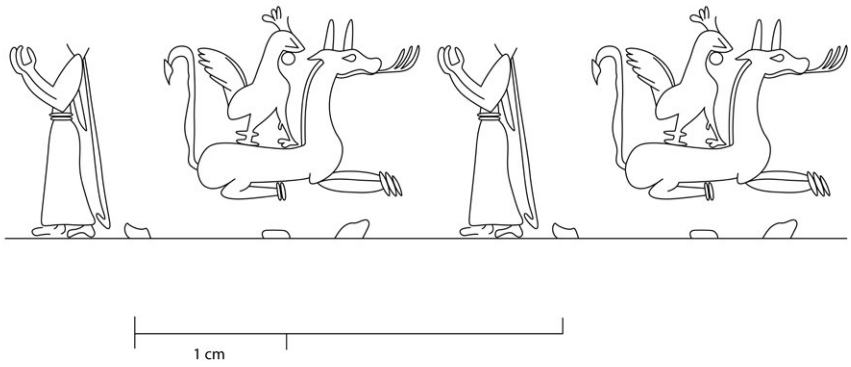

Figure 35. Collated line drawing of PFS 1052 (M.B. Garrison).

XI. Compositional format #3 at Persepolis

Several cylinder seals from Persepolis show scenes that appear closely related to compositional format #2, but without *kudurru*-shaped objects, or have elements of compositional format #1, but occur on cylinder seals. Given the fact that these seals are cylinders, I have opted to place them in a separate format. The designs are quite interesting and perhaps offer some insights into ways in which both formats of the Late Babylonian worship scene have been modified at Persepolis. Several of these seals are inscribed. In only two instances, PFS 813* (Figure 17) and PFS 1240* (Figure 12), are the inscriptions one of the two Babylonian formulae; all other seals that carry inscriptions in this group are in Elamite employing the conventional Elamite formula of PN_1 DUMU PN_2.

Scheme 3.1: worshipper before symbols on mušḫuššu *– total 2 cylinder seals*

a. worshipper before *marru* and double-stylus and bar on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal: 1 cylinder seal (Figure 17);
b. worshipper before rooster on *mušḫuššu*: 1 cylinder seal (Figure 35).

The cylinders PFS 813* (Figure 17) and PFS 1052 (Figure 35) are spectacular. As discussed above, PFS 813* is unusual in carrying the inscription ^{d}KASKAL, which in almost every other instance in Babylonia and Persepolis occurs on stamp seals.[152] On PFS 813*, a worshipper faces a *marru* and double-stylus with bar on a *mušḫuššu* that rests on a pedestal; between the worshipper and the *mušḫuššu* is a stand (seemingly similar to the stand on PFS 161*s [see above, scheme 1.9, Figure 14]). The worshipper is beardless but with a mass of hair at the back of his neck, the only example of such among all the worship scenes at Persepolis. The combination, beardless but with hair on the head, is rare also in the Babylonian evidence.[153] A small teardrop-shaped object floats in the field behind the inscription. The cuneiform signs are very large. The worship imagery, the large size of the seal, its spacious composition, and the rich modelled carving relate PFS 813* to those large and well-executed cylinder seals that show a worshipper before divine symbols that rest on *kudurru*-shaped monuments frequently attested in the Babylonian archives. The scene on PFS 813* lacks a *kudurru*-shaped object; and, of course, the cylinder seals from Babylonia very rarely depict the *marru* and stylus, either together or individually.[154] PFS 813* thus appears

[152] I know of only two cylinders from Babylonia that carry ^{d}KASKAL, both from Borsippa (Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3, on which see the comments above, p. 497–498; Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A157). See also below, PFS 1240* (Figure 12).

[153] See Ehrenberg 1999: 15, 22–23 (almost always either bald and beardless or hair on the head and bearded; exceptions are nos. 95 [= nos. 96, 97, 98, 99, 100 and 101] and 102 ["may be a female if not a eunuch"]); Altavilla and Walker 2009: 153 (a "few cases of hairy men without beards"); Altavilla and Walker 2016: 113 ("there may be a few exceptions since on many seals the worshipper's head is indistinct").

[154] Altavilla and Walker 2016: 118–119: "[w]hat comes as a surprise is the small number of cylinder seals with symbols of either Marduk [...] or Nabû [...]" a "direct contradiction to the pattern which we find in worship scenes on stamp seals [....]"; see above, note 25. At Uruk, Ehrenberg 1999: 25; nos. 128–130 [probably impressions of the same seal] show a *marru* and double-stylus before three *kudurru*-shaped objects that support divine symbols; no. 144, an unusual *kudurru*-shaped object, from which emerges a snake head, supports a *marru* and double-stylus. For Sippar, see Altavilla and Walker 2009: nos. A09(a–e?) (worshipper before a *marru* and double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal); no. A55 (very fragmentary, apparently *kudurru*-shaped object supports a *marru* and double-stylus with bar [at top]); no. A62 (large *marru* behind worshipper [Altavilla and Walker [2009: 129, s.v. A62] indicate that the worshipper is "hairy but beardless"]); no. B09d (worshipper before a *marru* and double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal). For the region of Babylon, see Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A105 (worshipper before three pedestals, on one of which rests a double-stylus with bar); no. A115 (worshipper before a double-stylus with bar on pedestal); no. A152a (worshipper before a *marru* and double-stylus); no. A160 (unusual scene of worshipper before a *marru* on pedestal and three *kudurru*-shaped objects on pedestals with divine symbols); no. A187 (worshipper before two pedestals, one of which holds a double-stylus); no. B186 (worshipper before a *marru* on pedestal and one *kudurru*-shaped object on pedestal); no. P101 (worshipper before five symbols free-floating in the field, one of which is a double-stylus with bar); no. P102 (worshipper before four symbols free-floating in the field, one of which is a double-stylus

to be something of an oddity and may reflect yet again the experimental nature of Persepolitan glyptic. The carving is exceptionally detailed and precise; PFS 1240* (see below, Figure 12) may come from the same workshop.

PFS 1052 (Figure 35) presents some interesting iconographic features. A worshipper stands before a rooster perched on a *mušḫuššu*. The *mušḫuššu* does not rest on a pedestal but is positioned slightly above the level of the worshipper's feet. The worshipper exhibits some distinctive differences from the conventional worshippers in compositional formats #1 and #2. The waist is very attenuated, giving the body something of an hour-glass profile (generally the worshipper's waist is thick in compositional formats #1 and #2, yielding a columnar figure). Both arms are clearly depicted, raised, the one in front of the other, the hands upturned (generally only one arm is depicted in compositional formats #1 and #2). A long thin element runs down from the back of the worshipper's head to the bottom of the garment, where it hooks inward toward the bottom hem. This element could represent the outline of a cloak, a decorative ribbon, or a counterweight for a necklace. The worshippers in both compositional formats #1 (stamp seals) and #2 (cylinder seals) on seals from Babylonia at times wear what Ehrenberg (1999: 16) characterizes as a fillet around the head from which a ribbon descends to run along the worshipper's back to waist level.[155] This ribbon seems quite different from what we see on PFS 1052. Another unusual feature of PFS 1052 is the *mušḫuššu* appearing without a pedestal or plinth; the convention in the Babylonian and Persepolitan examples, of course, is for the *mušḫuššu* to rest on/above a pedestal or thin plinth. Lastly, the combination of the rooster with the *mušḫuššu* is quite exceptional. As discussed above (note 97), the rooster can represent Nusku in Assyro-Babylonian art. I know of no other examples from either Babylonia or Persepolis, however, where the rooster stands on the back of a *mušḫuššu*.

Like PFS 813*, the overall dynamic of the scene on PFS 1052 seems closely related to the Late Babylonian worship scene. The style and decorum of the scene appear, however, better situated in a Late Neo-Elamite / Early Achaemenid glyptic context. Amiet (1973) in his important study of Late Neo-Elamite glyptic identified two seals that have compositional (worshipper with both hands raised before an animal) and stylistic (modelled style, attenuated waist of worshipper) connections with PFS 1052.[156] Amiet highlighted also the famous seal bearing the Elamite inscription "Huban-kitin, son of King Šutur-Nahunte " where rampant *mušḫuššu* flank an elaborate *marru*; the seal is rendered in a baroque modelled carving style.[157]

At Persepolis there are several seals that have features of composition and style that are very similar to what we see on PFS 1052; on five seals the worshipper has a long thin element running from the back of his head down to the bottom hem of the garment. The scenes from Persepolis are part of a large group of seals that depict a worshipper before an animal/creature. These seals represent a significant thematic category at Persepolis. While these scenes may owe some debt to the Late Babylonian worship scene, they are clearly distinct from it. For the purpose of this analysis, I would highlight the following seals where the worshipper has a long thin element running from the back of his head down to the bottom hem of his garment:[158]

PFS 2096* (Figure 3), a worshipper with arms raised before a *mušḫuššu*;

PFS 12a, a worshipper with arms raised before a winged lion marchant;

PFS 12b (Figure 36), a worshipper with arms raised before a winged lion marchant;

PFS 85a*, a worshipper with arms raised before a panelled inscription and rampant lion;

PFS 85b*, a worshipper with arms raised before a panelled inscription and rampant lion.

PFS 2096* (Figure 3) is particularly striking in its compositional, stylistic, and iconographic associations with PFS 1052; there are, however, no symbols on the back of the *mušḫuššu*. While the worshipper has both arms depicted (as on PFS 1052), his waist is thick in the Babylonian fashion. The beginning of the Elamite inscription is broken but clearly follows the conventional formula for Elamite inscriptions at Persepolis: PN_1 DUMU PN_2: '[...]tin, son of Šati-nauru.'[159] The seal represents an accounting office/official.[160]

with bar); no. P107 (three pedestals, one of which supports a double-stylus).

[155] Ehrenberg 1999: nos. 39, 45–46, 48, 54–56, 65 and 87, all stamp seals; nos. 102–106, 119–121, all cylinder seals. Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A198 and A227, but I do not think that the authors systematically indicate the presence of this element. There do not appear to be any worshippers who wear this fillet and ribbon on the seals from Persepolis.

[156] Amiet 1973: nos. 46–47; see also Miroschedji 1982: fig. 4.2 (private collection).

[157] Amiet 1973: 18, no. 34; "Le cylindre de Hupan-kitin, fils du roi Shutur-Nahunte (n°34) sort manifestement d'un atelier royal; il est gravé avec un soin extrême, où se manifeste de façon particulièrement sensible le goût pour les anatomies musclées et nerveuses, caractéristique de la glyptique néo-élamite." See also the comments of Miroschedji 1982: 61–62; Garrison 2018.

[158] PFS 12a and PFS 12b (Figure 36), along with PFS 85a* and PFS 85b*, are what we designate replica seals. The couplets represent two distinct seals (slight differences in style and pose of the worshipper) that are used administratively in exactly the same manner; see also the comments below, note 177 on the seals of Barikila.

[159] Mikołajczak 2018: 472; Chandler 2021: 419.

[160] The seal occurs on only one tablet, NN 148. PFS 85a* and PFS 85b*

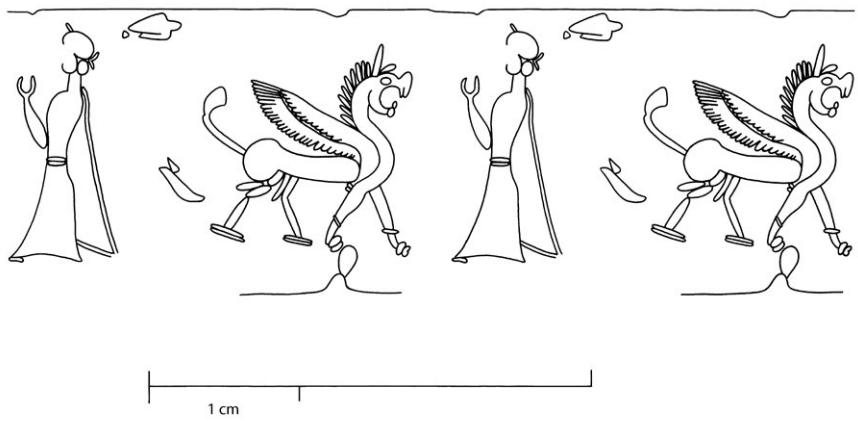

Figure 36. Collated line drawing of PFS 12b (M.B. Garrison).

The replica seals PFS 12a and PFS 12b (Figure 36) also belong to an accounting office/official, one of the most important in the PFA.[161] On both seals the bottom of the long thin element running from the back of the worshipper's head turns inward to connect to the bottom edge of the garment, as we see on PFS 2096*. PFS 12a and PFS 12b are smaller than PFS 1052 and PFS 2096*, the modelled carving more compact, segmented, and exaggerated. The carving style is one of the most popular at Persepolis.[162]

Another seal with interesting points of contact with PFS 1052 is PFS 706*. The seal has close compositional and stylistic links to PFS 1052, although there is no long thin element running from the back of the worshipper's head down to the bottom of his garment.[163] The seal, as PFS 2096*, PFS 85a*, and PFS 85b*, carries an Elamite inscription.[164] The winged creature and the worshipper's dagger intrude into the space of the inscription; while one may assume that the figural imagery has been modified from the original design, on many inscribed seals at Persepolis parts of the figural imagery cross into the inscriptional zone.[165] The modelled carving style is the same as we see on PFS 12a and PFS 12b (Figure 36).

3.2. worshipper before divine symbol(s) on pedestal or plinth – total 4 cylinder seals

a. worshipper before lightning bolt on bull that rests on plinth: 1 cylinder seal (Figure 28);
b. worshipper before ram-headed staff on goat-fish that rests on thin plinth: 3 cylinder seals (Figure 12).

These seals compositionally and iconographically belong with compositional format #1, but they appear on cylinder seals and for this reason I grouped them with compositional format #3. Three of these cylinder seals, as those in scheme 3.1, are exceptional glyptic artifacts.

The thunderbolt and bull, associated with Adad, relate the scene on PFS 518 (Figure 28) to the stamp seals PFATS 34*s (scheme 1.6, Figure 25) and PFS 289*s (scheme 1.8, Figure 5) discussed above. As noted there, the lightning bolt on a bull that rests on a pedestal or plinth is very rare on both stamp and cylinder seals in Babylonia. PFS 518 is a large seal and carved in a rich modelled style.[166]

The cylinder PFS 1240* (Figure 12), a worshipper before a goat-fish and ram-headed staff, is only partially

also carry Elamite inscriptions, both broken, in the formula PN_1 DUMU PN_2.

[161] Mikołajczak 2018: 124–130, 252–253, 338–348.

[162] See the comments of Amiet (1973: 18) above, note 157; this version of the Persepolitan modelled style has distinct links with the seals from Susa (see Garrison 2002, 2011, 2018).

[163] That PFS 85a*, PFS 85b*, PFS 706*, and PFS 2096* (Figure 3), are inscribed most likely indicates that the scene was much prized by seal owners of high rank. On the users of inscribed seals at Persepolis, see Chandler 2021.

[164] Almost all signs are broken, but we can read a DUMU in line three, hence most likely PN_1 DUMU PN_2.

[165] See the comments of Chandler 2021: 160–209.

[166] PFS 518 occurs on nine tablets. On four of those, the seal has been applied as if a stamp, focusing on the worshipper and the head of the bull (Fort. 906–101 rev; NN 1769 le; NN 1769 ue; PF 244 le). This practice is very rare in the PFA (see the comments above, PFUTS 1618, scheme 2.1). The feature is even more noteworthy on NN 1769 and PF 244, since the applications occur on the restricted surface of the left edge. As observed by many commentators, this sealing practice is very commonly encountered on tablets from Late Babylonian temple and private archives where large cylinders carrying the Late Babylonian worship scene are applied as if stamp seals (and focusing on the worshipper). With both PFUTS 1618 (Figures 33–34) and PFS 518, it is difficult to discern whether this practice represents some connection to sealing practice in Babylonia. The Elamite texts sealed by PFS 518 are grain audits/inventories; the seal-users, presumably the auditors, are never named in such texts.

preserved, but it clearly was a large and beautifully carved design;[167] it carries the inscriptional formula ^{d}KASKAL. The scene, as noted above (scheme 1.7), occurs on a handful of stamp seals from Persepolis.[168] The scene is rare on cylinder seals from Babylonia.[169] Stylistically PFS 1240* appears as if it could have originated from the same workshop as PFS 813* (Figure 17); the signs on both PFS 1240* and PFS 813* are quite large.

Only the goat-fish and ram-headed staff are preserved on PFUTS 1437; again, this was a very large seal by Persepolitan standards.

Scheme 3.3: worshipper before marru *and stylus – total 2 cylinder seals*

Only two rather cursorily carved cylinder seals belong in this scheme, PFS 3294 and PFUTS 786 (Figure 37). Both seals are also poorly preserved; in neither case does it appear that the *marru* or stylus rests on a pedestal or plinth. There are two worshippers on PFS 3294, further confounding the emergence of a clear typological category for these seals. The scene on PFUTS 786 (Figure 37) includes a crescent and star; the concentration of divine symbols in the scene recalls visual conventions on Assyrian cylinder seals.[170]

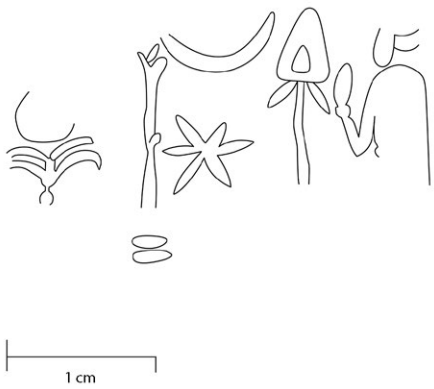

Figure 37. Collated line drawing of PFUTS 786 (M.B. Garrison).

XII. Concluding thoughts

The glyptic imagery preserved in the PFA is one of the most significant corpora of visual imagery that survives from Western Asia in the 1st millennium BCE. Persepolitan glyptic drew extensively on Assyrian and Babylonian traditions. This interaction was not, however, simply rote imitation of these earlier traditions; rather, as we have witnessed with the Late Babylonian worship scene, the seal carvers in southwestern Iran have often modified those traditions or emphasized different elements. The Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis exists principally on stamp seals. Compositional format #2 (on cylinder seals), a worshipper before divine symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects, a format with a rich tradition in the Babylonian archives, is almost non-existent at Persepolis.

Among the stamp seals showing some version of compositional format #1 at Persepolis, a worshipper standing before a *marru* and stylus (or double-stylus) on a pedestal is by far and away the most commonly occurring scheme. This scheme is also very common in the Late Babylonian archives. The majority of seals that show this scheme at Persepolis are cut, however, in an abstract cut-and-drilled style; in the Late Babylonia archives, the cut-and-drilled style is rarely encountered (the preferred style being a modelled style). For the moment, given that the principal Late Babylonian archives overlap in date with the PFA, one would perhaps assume that this manifest difference in stylistic preferences indicates spatial and/or contextual phenomena.

Other schemes in compositional format #1 at Persepolis often show marked differences in iconography from the Babylonian archives: e.g., the relative popularity of the lamp of Nusku and the goat-fish with ram-headed staff at Persepolis.

The wealth of Babylonian imagery in the glyptic from the PFA raises the obvious question as to why these Babylonian formats had such appeal in southwestern Iran in the late 6th and early 5th centuries BCE. Babylonians and individuals bearing Babylonian or West Semitic names, although not in large numbers, are well documented in the PFA.[171] Commentators have

[167] PFS 2163 appears to show a similar scene, but it is poorly preserved.

[168] On the linkage of the goat-fish and ram-headed staff with Ea, see above, scheme 1.7.

[169] A few cylinders from Babylon and Borsippa have a worshipper before a goat-fish (generally with ram-headed staff): Altavilla and Walker 2016: nos. A145 (on thin plinth), A225, A233 (on pedestal), A234 (on thin plinth), B107a (no staff), B123 and B125 (on thin plinth).

[170] E.g., Collon 2001: nos. 135–149, 203–207, 232–233 and 244–258.

[171] Tavernier (2002: 145–146) lists 19 Akkadian and 12 West Semitic names in the Elamite texts from the PFA; his list does not include all the names given in Stolper (1984: 305 note 18) or Lipiński 1977; Hinz and Koch (1987) read many more personal names as possibly Akkadian. In any case, the number of Akkadian and West Semitic personal names in the PFA accounts for approximately 1% or less of the Persepolitan onomasticon. To no surprise, approximately 90% of the personal names in the PFA are Iranian; the remainder are Elamite (Henkelman 2008: 348–349; see also Tavernier 2002: 147–148, for two individuals with possible Egyptian names and two with Anatolian and/or Greek names). On Babylonians in general at Persepolis, see: Delaunay 1976; Lipiński 1977; Stolper 1984: 304–310; Giovinazzo 1989; Tavernier 2002; Henkelman and Kleber 2007; Henkelman 2008:

often observed that some scribes at Persepolis are labelled "Babylonian" or "Babylonian scribes (writing) on leather."[172] Stolper (1984: 305) notes that "at least 8 (and perhaps 11)" of the scribes named in the subscripts to some letter-orders "have transcribed Babylonian names or West Semitic names well paralleled in texts from Babylonia."[173] Henkelman (2008: 337–338) has also identified evidence for the presence of Babylonian communities in southwestern Iran (and the region of Persepolis in particular) since the reign of Cambyses.[174]

Of the 120 seals included in this study (Appendix 1), we can definitively identify the seal-user (an official or an office) in only 30 instances (Appendix 4).[175] Two of these individuals have Babylonian names: Beltin (= Bēl-iddin), who uses PFS 451*s; Hitibel (= Itti-Bēl), who uses PFS 1283s (Figure 21).[176] Another has a West Semitic name, Barikila (= *Barik-'Ēl).[177] All other names are Iranian.

Whether the presence of native Babylonians in the region of Persepolis was large or small has no bearing on the amount of "Babylonianizing" imagery reflected in the glyptic from the PFA. The Persepolitan glyptic landscape consisted of a mosaic of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Elamite features (composition, style, and iconography). For the moment, it is extremely difficult to isolate a distinct "Iranian" imagery and style in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE given the lack of any meaningful evidence from archival contexts at Pasargadae, Ekbatana, or some other site where Persian-speaking peoples lived pre-dating the reign of Darius I.[178] Research to date on the question of what, exactly, glyptic imagery signifies at Persepolis has revealed that, at least at the very highest levels of the administrative hierarchy, socio-administrative rank/status, not ethnicity, appears to have been the prime driver of the selection of glyptic imagery.[179] Thus, we ought not to expect the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis to signify a "Babylonian," just as Assyrianizing imagery does not identify an "Assyrian."[180]

Babylonian gods are not attested in the pantheon of deities sponsored by the state as recorded in the PFA, but, as Henkelman (2008: 342) states, this phenomenon must represent "the simple logic of indigenous vs. expatriate gods."[181] This question of Babylonian gods and Babylonian imagery in the Marv Dašt has recently come to the fore in a dramatic fashion with the discovery of the monumental mudbrick gate, measuring 39.07 × 29.05 m., at Tol-e Ājori by an Iranian/Italian research project.[182] The gate, located only some 3.5 km to the southwest of the Takht at Persepolis in the area today known as Bāgh-e Fīrūzi, is very close to being an exact replica, in size and decoration, of the inner section of the Ištar Gate at Babylon.[183] The decoration includes monochrome and polychrome glazed brick and figural glazed brick.[184] The imagery to date consists of floral

305–351; Tolini 2008; Tolini 2011: 373–386 (focusing principally on Babylonian work groups and scribes, with bibliography on previous scholarship).

[172] Henkelman (2008: 340 note 797) lists the texts.

[173] Of the Babylonian personal names in the PFA, Stolper (1984: 306) observes: "Despite the many examples of onomastic assimilation in the provinces, there is no reason for Iranians in Fārs to have adopted foreign names. These clearly non-Iranian names are very likely to mark their bearers' origins. If so, many non-Iranians served in subordinate but privileged posts at the central offices of the Persepolis administration. They had access to the administrative archives kept at the Persepolis terrace. Babylonians were numerous among them."

[174] This evidence is given more extensive treatment in Tolini 2011: 181–233, 235, 237–239.

[175] Identifying the officials/offices that use specific seals in the PFA is often challenging (see Garrison 2017: 52–71); in only four instances within the whole of the PFA do we get what appears to be a caption next to a seal impression identifying the seal-user (a convention common in Late Babylonian temple and private archives). This list of 30 seals in Appendix 4 is conservative, marking only cases where I am fairly certain of the link between seal-user and seal (this list includes office seals as well as personal seals). I divide the individuals into two categories: 1) travellers on the royal road; in most cases, these individuals will not be locally based but simply moving through the system; 2) officials/offices embedded within the PFA agency; these individuals are locally based. The fact that over half of these 30 seal-users are travellers on the royal road is an interesting phenomenon that deserves more extended treatment in a separate venue. Stamp seals are not equally attested across the PFA. Almost 46% of stamp seals that occur on the Elamite texts (PF) published by Hallock (1969) occur on receipts of rations for travel (representing the seals of the receivers of those rations). Stamp seals are also much more commonly attested on the Aramaic and uninscribed documents than on the Elamite (see Garrison 2017: 51–52).

[176] On Hitibel, see Stolper 1984: 305 note 20; Hinz and Koch 1987: 672 (*s.v.* hh.*hi-ti-be-ul*).

[177] On Barikila, see Tavernier 2002: 147 (*s.v.* 2.14). Barikila appears to use two seals, PFS 2907s (Figure 18) and PFS 186s (Figure 19). Even more remarkable, these two seals are stamp seals and carry versions of the Late Babylonian worship scene that includes a lamp-on-a-stand. This phenomenon, an individual or office using more than one seal, is fairly rare at Persepolis except for *kurman* (supply) office seals, but there are some very high-rank individuals who change seals, e.g., the directors Parnakka and Ašbazana and the deputy-director Ziššawiš (see, e.g., Garrison 1998; 2017: 333–374, also above, note 158, for the replica seals PFS 12a/PFS 12b (Figure 36) and PFS 85a*/PFS 85b*). Since the date formula in the one text on which PFS 2907s occurs is broken, one cannot determine whether Barikila is using the two seals simultaneously or in succession. On seals used by *kurman* authorities, see Garrison and Henkelman 2020.

[178] Obviously, certain iconographic elements, such as the Persian court robe and the dentate crown, are new features of the glyptic landscape in the reign of Darius. We may better characterize these iconographic elements as distinctly imperial Achaemenid rather than Iranian (in the sense of a continuous Iranian visual tradition pre-dating the reign of Darius).

[179] E.g., Garrison 2011, 2014a, 2014b.

[180] In a similar manner, Elamite and Aramaic seal inscriptions at Persepolis do not identify Elamites or Western Semites; these inscriptions overwhelmingly carry Iranian names (see Chandler 2021: 272–275, Appendix 1)

[181] Henkelman 2008: 333, 375 (lack of Babylonian deities in the Elamite texts from the PFA texts); "expatriate cults are a factor that should be reckoned with, especially in the case of Babylonians in Achaemenid Fārs ... [n]othing, however, pleads against the assumption that the Babylonians of Hidali, Susa, and Ḫumadēšu /Persepolis not only kept their own social and legal structure, but had also brought along some of their homeland cults" (p. 341).

[182] See Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017, Basello 2017, Amadori *et al.* 2018, and Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2020, with references to previous reports.

[183] Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017: 223.

[184] Monochrome glazed bricks occur in brown-black, yellow, orange-yellow, and white (Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017: 217–219); polychrome glazed bricks occur in yellow, white, and brown-black

and geometric elements (lower wall courses) and bulls and *mušḫuššu* (upper wall courses).[185] The bulls and *mušḫuššu* are so similar to their counterparts at Babylon that the excavators raise the possibility that the same molds were employed.[186] The monumental gate at Tol-e Ājori would appear to be an entrance to a large complex whose central structures seem to have been the very poorly preserved remains at what is today known as Fīrūzi 5.[187] When seen in this larger context, the gate at Tol-e Ājori becomes part of a complex comparable in scale to the Takht at Persepolis.[188]

The excavators date the gate at Tol-e Ājori to the reigns of Cyrus or Cambyses, the construction of the Takht at Persepolis marking the terminus ante quem, based upon what we could broadly characterize as historical context: the orientation of the gate at Tol-e Ājori and the structures at Fīrūzi 5 differ from the orientation of the structures on the Takht at Persepolis; the gate at Tol-e Ājori and the structures on the Takht reflect different building traditions; the general method in which the gate at Tol-e Ājori is situated within an architectural landscape reflects Pasargadae more than it does Persepolis; the imagery on the gate at Tol-e Ājori is closer to that seen in Palace S at Pasargadae than any building on the Takht at Persepolis; the *mušḫuššu* decorating the gate at Tol-e Ājori are not attested in architectural relief at either Pasargadae or Persepolis; the strong Babylonian character of the gate at Tol-e Ājori is unlikely to have been executed in such a monumental undertaking once Darius had instituted a "court style" proper; the lack of any evidence for an inscription in Old Persian at Tol-e Ājori.[189]

Future excavation at Tol-e Ājori may yield definitive archaeological evidence for the construction date of the gate. For the moment, the Babylonianizing imagery represented by the worship scenes preserved in the PFA surveyed in this study would appear to complement nicely the Babylonian architectural and decorative details evidenced by the gate at Tol-e Ājori. As noted above, various factors suggest that this Babylonianizing imagery in Persepolitan glyptic does not represent "antique" Babylonian seals re-used at Persepolis but reflects a renewal/continuation of Babylonian glyptic trends at Persepolis.[190] What is so striking about both the gate at Tol-e Ājori and the Late Babylonian worship scenes in Persepolitan glyptic is the literalness of the citation of Late Babylonian culture![191]

Perhaps the most interesting observations regarding the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis are the strength of this Babylonian visual tradition, its variety and richness, and the appearance of these two very specifically Babylonian seal inscriptional formulae that eschew personal names, which occur in almost all Elamite and Aramaic seal inscriptions at Persepolis, in favor of what appear to be divine names and/or divine invocations.[192]

One of the most conspicuous features of Persepolitan glyptic is its conscious and deliberate revival of earlier seal carving traditions. Previous studies have tended to focus upon the Assyrian and Elamite features in Persepolitan glyptic.[193] The Late Babylonian worship scenes at Persepolis accord well with the Assyrian and Elamite visual traditions at Persepolis. The occurrence of the Late Babylonian worship scene at Persepolis expresses one aspect of what is a most remarkable period of glyptic revival and experimentation taking place in the reign of Darius I at the imperial capital in the heart of the empire.

squares (Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017: 232–236); see also Amadori *et al.* 2018.

185 Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017: 232–237.

186 Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2017: 233–234; Amadori *et al.* 2018: 132.

187 Askari Chaverdi, Callieri and Matin 2017: 224–226, pls. 6b, 7a.

188 The distance between the gate at Tol-e Ājori and Fīrūzi 5 is 360 m. (Askari Chaverdi, Callieri and Matin 2017: 225). The area encompassed by the remains at Fīrūzi 5 is approximately 160 m. (SW–NE) × 92 m. (NW–SE). The central north–south axis on the Takht measures approximately 428 m., the east–west approximately 300 m. (Schmidt 1953: 61).

189 Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin 2014: 237–238; Amadori *et al.* 2018: 132. Askari Chaverdi, Callieri, and Matin (2014: 238) suggest that the gate may never have been finished. See also Basello (2017: 272) on the nature of the epigraphic record from Tol-e Ājori.

190 This issue of the continuation of Late Babylonian imagery into the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius was, of course, one of the principal conclusions of the often-cited study by Zettler (1979); all commentators have stressed this issue of continuity attested in glyptic between the Late Babylonian period and the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius (e.g., Ornan 2005a: 115–118). Bregstein (1993: 291–292, 373) concludes the same for the Late Babylonian worship scenes at Nippur; i.e., they were contemporary glyptic products, not re-used Late Babylonian seals.

191 See Kaniuth (2018: 350–352), who, in his study on glazed brick decoration in the Late Babylonian and Achaemenid periods, reviews the issues surrounding the chronology of the various building phases of the Ištar Gate at Babylon and the possibilities that: 1) the last phase (3) of the Ištar Gate post-dates the Chaldean dynasty; 2) the gate at Tol-e Ājori may date to the reign of Darius.

192 In West Semitic glyptic, neither inscriptional formula is attested. Some West Semitic seals carry variations of compositional format #1 and Aramaic inscriptions, but those inscriptions, in contrast to the inscriptions paired with the Late Babylonian scene at Persepolis, are almost always personal names (see Galling 1941: 155–157, nos. 121–124; Ornan 1993: 63–64, figs. 36–47).

193 E.g., Garrison 2002, 2011, 2013, 2014b, 2018; Colburn 2014: 788–791; 2020. See Root (1997) on what she characterizes as cultural pluralism reflected in the texts and seals from the PFA.

Appendix 1: List of seals in each of the scheme types in this study

-Schemes

worshipper before symbols on stamp seals 111 stamp seals	Scheme 1.1: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or double-stylus on pedestal – total 64 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.2: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or *marru* alone on ground line – total 3 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.3: worshipper before *marru*, stylus or double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 12 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.4: worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 2 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.5: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal – total 9 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.6: worshipper before symbols on bull that rests on pedestal – total 2 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.7: worshipper before symbol(s) on goat-fish that rests on pedestal or plinth – total 3 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.8: worshipper before symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals – total 6 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.9: two worshippers disposed to either side of symbol(s) – total 4 stamp seals
	Scheme 1.10: *marru* and/or stylus alone – total 6 stamp seals
worshipper before *kudurru* on cylinder seals 1 cylinder seal	Scheme 2.1: worshipper before *kudurru*-shaped objects supporting divine symbols and resting on pedestals – total 1 cylinder seal
worshipper before symbols on cylinder seals 8 cylinder seals	Scheme 3.1: worshipper before symbols on *mušḫuššu* – total 2 cylinder seals
	Scheme 3.2: worshipper before divine symbol(s) resting on pedestal or plinth – total 4 cylinder seals
	Scheme 3.3: worshipper before *marru* and stylus – total 2 cylinder seals

-List of seals by schemes:

Scheme 1.1: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or double-stylus on pedestal – total 64 stamp seals

a. worshipper before* marru *and stylus on pedestal: 6 stamp seals

PFATS 408s
PFATS 567s
PFS 262s (with star)
PFS 1068s
PFS 1414s (with dot-in-crescent)
PFUTS 1370*s (with crescent) (Figure 11)

b. worshipper before* marru *and stylus on pedestal and winged symbol: 4 stamp seals

PFATS 656s (with star) (Figure 6)
PFS 958s (with star) (Figure 7)
PFUTS 215s
PFUTS 220s

c. worshipper before* marru *and double-stylus on pedestal: 25 stamp seals

PFATS 28s (with crescent)
PFATS 39s (with crescent)
PFATS 242s
PFATS 360s
PFS 116s
PFS 273s (with star) (Figure 8)
PFS 1121s (with two crescents)
PFS 1228*s
PFS 1271s (with crescent)
PFS 2105s (with crescent)
PFS 2337s
PFS 2365s
PFS 2753s (with crescent)
PFS 2819s
PFS 3117s (with star)
PFS 3143s (with star?)
PFS 3317s (with star)
PFUTS 9s
PFUTS 51s (with crescent)
PFUTS 95s
PFUTS 462s
PFUTS 464s
PFUTS 549s (with plant and crescent)
PFUTS 832s
PFUTS 1056s (with star)

d. worshipper before* marru *and double-stylus with bar on pedestal: 6 stamp seals

PFS 499s
PFS 623s (with crescent)
PFS 1037s (Figure 9)
PFUTS 296s (with crescent[?])
PFUTS 1433s
PFUTS 1441s

e. worshipper before* marru*, stylus, and double-stylus on pedestal: 2 stamp seals

PFS 668s (with star)
PFUTS 1307s

f. worshipper before* marru *and wedge-shaped stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 1576s

g. worshipper before* marru *(no stylus) on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFATS 31s (with crescent)

h. worshipper before 2* marru *and double-stylus on pedestal: 3 stamp seals

PFATS 159s (with star)
PFATS 466s (with crescent)
PFUTS 1265s (with star)

i. worshipper before 2* marru*, stylus, and double-stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 279s (with crescent)

j. worshipper before 3* marru *and double-stylus with bar on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFATS 133s (with crescent) (Figure 10)

k. worshipper before symbols whose exact form cannot be determined on pedestal (generally only lower parts of symbols preserved or partially preserved) 14 stamp seals

PFATS 434s
PFATS 484s
PFS 1159s (with star)
PFS 1333s
PFS 2093s (with crescent)
PFS 2178s
PFS 3025s (with crescent)
PFS 3142s
PFS 3284s
PFUTS 38s
PFUTS 388s
PFUTS 418s (with crescent)
PFUTS 1051s
PFUTS 1657s

Scheme 1.2: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or *marru* alone on ground line – total 3 stamp seals

a. worshipper before* marru *and stylus(?) on ground line: 1 stamp seal

PFS 1426s

b. worshipper before* marru *on ground line: 2 stamp seals

PFATS 81s
PFUTS 1316s

Scheme 1.3: Worshipper before *marru*, stylus or double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 12 stamp seals

a. worshipper before* marru*, stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 2907s (? whether lamp-on-a-stand; with star) (Figure 18)

b. worshipper before* marru*, double-stylus, and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 4 stamp seals

PFATS 132s (? whether lamp-on-a-stand)
PFS 1205*s (with crescent) (Figure 13)
PFS 1687s
PFUTS 889s

c. worshipper before* marru *and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 3 stamp seals

PFS 186s (Figure 19)
PFS 1140s (with star)
PFUTS 1605s (Figure 4)

d. worshipper before two* marru *and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 1559s (Figure 20)

e. worshipper before double-stylus and lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal: 2 stamp seals

PFATS 402s
PFATS 463s

f. worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand and other undetermined symbols on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 1253s

Scheme 1.4: worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal – total 2 stamp seals

a. worshipper before lamp-on-a-stand on pedestal

PFATS 446s (Figure 22)
PFUTS 1578s

Scheme 1.5: worshipper before *marru* and stylus or double-stylus on *mušḫuššu* that rests on pedestal – total 9 stamp seals

a. worshipper before* marru *and double-stylus with bar on* mušḫuššu *on pedestal: 3 stamp seals

PFATS 520s (with crescent)
PFS 451*s (with crescent) (Figure 15)

PFS 3059s (with crescent and rhombus) (Figure 23)

b. worshipper before* marru *and double-stylus on* mušḫuššu *on pedestal: 3 stamp seals

PFS 3138s (with dot-in-crescent) (Figure 24)
PFUTS 725s (with crescent)
PFUTS 1096s (with crescent)

c. worshipper before* marru *on* mušḫuššu *on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFATS 648s (with winged symbol)

d. worshipper before four styli on* mušḫuššu *on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 1283s (with free-standing lamp-on-a-stand) (Figure 21)

e. worshipper before symbols (exact form cannot be determined owing to preservation) on* mušḫuššu *on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 2804s

Scheme 1.6: worshipper before symbols on bull that rests on pedestal – total 2 stamp seals

a. worshipper before lightning bolt on bull that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFATS 34*s (Figure 25)

b. worshipper before undetermined symbol(s) on bull that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 60s

Scheme 1.7: worshipper before symbol(s) on goat-fish that rests on pedestal or plinth – total 3 stamp seals

a. worshipper before ram-headed staff on goat-fish that rests on pedestal: 3 stamp seals

PFS 1216*s (Figure 16)
PFUTS 1477s
PFUTS 1609s

Scheme 1.8: worshipper before symbols on *kudurru*-shaped objects that rest on pedestals – total 6 stamp seals

a. worshipper before dot-in-crescent on* kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 862s (Figure 26)

b. worshipper before lightning bolt on* kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 289*s (with winged symbol) (Figure 5)

c. worshipper before undetermined symbol on* kudurru*-shaped object and lamp-on-a-stand that rest on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 1655s

d. worshipper before crescent on* kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 1218*s (Figure 27)

e. worshipper before undetermined symbol on* kudurru*-shaped object that rests on pedestal: 2 stamp seals

PFUTS 1131s
PFUTS 1304s

Scheme 1.9: two worshippers disposed to either side of symbol(s) – total 4 stamp seals

a. two worshippers disposed to either side of* marru *and double-stylus resting on series of superimposed thin plinths: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 504s

b. two worshippers disposed to either side of* marru *displayed in U-shaped frame: 1 stamp seal

PFS 3064s (with crescent) (Figure 29)

c. two worshippers disposed to either side of* marru*: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 1424s (with star)

d. two worshippers disposed to either side of stand/altar: 1 stamp seal

PFS 161*s (Figure 14)

Scheme 1.10: *marru* and/or stylus alone – total 6 stamp seals

a.* marru *and stylus on pedestal: 1 stamp seal

PFS 3078s

b.* marru *and double-stylus on pedestal: 2 stamp seals

PFUTS 624s
PFUTS 1647s

c.* marru *and double-stylus on* mušḫuššu*: 1 stamp seal

PFATS 385s (Figure 30)

d.* marru *and double-stylus: 1 stamp seal

PFUTS 812s (Figure 31)

e.* marru*-like symbol: 1 stamp seal

PFS 2900s (with crescent)

Scheme 2.1. worshipper before *kudurru*-shaped objects supporting divine symbols and resting on pedestals – total 1 cylinder seal

PFUTS 1618 (Figures 33-34)

Scheme 3.1: worshipper before symbols on *mušḫuššu* – total 2 cylinder seals

a. worshipper before* marru *and double-stylus and bar on* mušḫuššu *that rests on pedestal: 1 cylinder seal

PFS 813* (with stand) (Figure 17)

b. worshipper before rooster on* mušḫuššu*: 1 cylinder seal

PFS 1052 (Figure 35)

Scheme 3.2. worshipper before divine symbol(s) resting on pedestal or plinth – total 4 cylinder seals

a. worshipper before lightning bolt on bull that rests on plinth: 1 cylinder seal

PFS 518 (Figure 28)

b. worshipper before ram-headed staff on goat-fish that rests on thin plinth: 3 cylinder seals

PFS 1240* (Figure 12)
PFS 2163
PFUTS 1437

Scheme 3.3: worshipper before *marru* and stylus – total 2 cylinder seals

PFS 3294
PFUTS 786 (with crescent and star) (Figure 37)

Appendix 2a: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}KASKAL on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by provenance

Commentators transcribe this inscription in a variety of manners: ^{d}KASKAL, AN.KASKAL, ^{d}DUḪ.DUḪ, and DUḪ x DUḪ (see text notes 75 and 76). In the lists that follow, I use ^{d}KASKAL and do not attempt to track the different transcriptions offered by each commentator. As a general observation, Mitchell and Searight (2008) employ ^{d}DUḪ.DUḪ, Bregstein (1993), Beaulieu in Ehrenberg 2000a, and Altavilla and Walker (2009) ^{d}KASKAL, and Altavilla and Walker (2016) both ^{d}KASKAL and ^{d}DUḪ.DUḪ (no explanation given for the different transcriptions).

Copies of this inscription and/or accurate transcriptions indicating broken signs are relatively rare in publications. Where possible with the published data, I provide a transcription to indicate broken signs, either that provided by the commentator(s) or based upon published drawings or photographs; in some instances, an accurate transcription is not possible given the lack of a copy (in which case I read simply ^{d}KASKAL).

Key:

City	the site where the seal (impression[s] on tablet[s]) was found; the name of the archive, if known, is indicated in parentheses
Seal-user	indicated when known
Office	of the seal-user, indicated when known
Inscription	transcription of the inscription (see above)
Read	whether the inscription is cut to be read in the stone or in impression (impr.); in some instances, too little of the inscription is preserved to make a determination
Seal	X indicates that the seal is preserved as a physical object
Impr	X indicates that the seal is preserved only in impression(s) on clay document(s)
Seal type	stmp indicates stamp seal; cyl indicates cylinder seal
Scene	LBWS = some version of the Late Babylonian worship scene; LBWS *kudurru* = compositional format #2
Date	ruler and year date of the earliest attested application of the seal on a clay document (to the year, not day and month); if the seal does not occur on a well-dated document, the date is based upon general considerations of whatever contextual information is known and/or stylistic analysis. Chronological abbreviations[1]: ARTA I: Artaxerxes I 465–424 BCE ARTA II: Artaxerxes II 404–359/358 BCE ARTA III: Artaxerxes III 359/358–338/337 BCE CAMB: Cambyses 530–522 BCE DAR I: Darius I 522/521–486 BCE DAR II: Darius II 423–404 BCE DAR III: Darius III 338/337–331 BCE LB–ACH: Late Babylonian – Achaemenid NERIG: Neriglissar 560–556 BCE
References	select publication(s) of the seal and/or the document(s) on which it occurs

[1] The dates follow Parker and Dubberstein 1942.

City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Babylon	-	-	^{d}KASKAL ⌜x⌝[2]	impr.	X		stmp	LBWS	LB–ACH	Jacob-Rost 1997: no. 237 Lambert 1989: 543–544
Babylon(?)	-	-	[d]⌜KASKAL⌝	?		X	cyl	fragment with scorpion-man	LB–ACH	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. GSM106[3]
Babylon	Ḫabaṣīru // Ea-eppēš-ilī	judge	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 32	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A321 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 460a Wunsch 1995/96: 60 no. 10 (a copy of BM 33932)
Babylon	Ina-ṣilli-Esagil // Zēriya(?)	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	god with flowing waters	DAR I 9	Baker 2004: 125 (tablet no. 44), 394 (no. 44)
Babylon	Mušēzib-Bēl // Kiribtu	judge	^{d}KASKAL	stone		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 33	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A322[4]
Babylon	Nidintu-Nabû	scribe	^{d}KASKAL MIN[?5]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	ARTA I	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3 Balzer 2007: no. H8abd.1
Babylon (Esangila)	-	-	[d]⌜KASKAL⌝[?]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	ARTA II/III	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A327a
Borsippa (Ilia)	Marduk-šuma-ibni / Šulāya // Ilia	scribe/ notary	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	DAR I 19	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A157 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 425[6]
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	⌜d⌝KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 5
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 6
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	⌜d⌝KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 14
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 22 (=nos. 23 and 24)
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	[d]⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.?		X	stmp	worshipper before creature	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 28
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 32
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}KASKAL	stone		X	stmp	hero-combat	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 46

[2] The KASKAL has been augmented by three pairs of winkelhakens; see also below, note 5.
[3] The tablet is not included in Mitchell and Searight (2008).
[4] The tablet is not included in Mitchell and Searight (2008).
[5] The KASKAL has been augmented by four pairs of winkelhakens; Bregstein (1993: 105 note 162) reads MIN "written through the middle of the KASKAL sign."
[6] Mitchell and Searight (2008: 146) do not indicate that the seal is inscribed.

City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	⌜d⌝KASKAL⌝	?		X	stmp	hero-control	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 52
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	d⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	hero-control	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 53
Nippur	-	-	d⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	CAMB 0	Balzer 2007: no. H10b.2
Nippur	Aplā	judge	dKASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 6	Balzer 2007: no. H7e.19 Clay 1908: no. 107
Nippur (Murašû)	Sangilu // Bēl-bullissu	-	dKASKAL	?		X	stmp	worshipper + scorpion-man	DAR II 0	Bregstein 1993: no. 232 Balzer 2007: no. H4j.4
Nippur (Murašû)	Šulum-Bābili // Bēl-ittia	*paqdu* of Artaumanu	dKASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR II 2	Bregstein 1993: no. 222 Balzer 2007: no. H4u.12
Nippur (Murašû)	Bēl-erība // Bēl-ēṭir	-	dKASKAL	impr.?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR II 3	Bregstein 1993: no. 217 Balzer 2007: no. H4s.2
Nippur (Murašû)	Bēl-ēṭir // Bēl-bullissu	*rab kāri ša* LUGAL	dKASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR II 5	Bregstein 1993: no. 219 Balzer 2007: no. E3f.6[7]
Nippur (Murašû)	Bēlšunu // Marduka	-	dKASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR II 6	Bregstein 1993: no. 225 Balzer 2007: no. H4u.7
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1240*)	Mitrabada	*kanzabara* (travel)	[d]⌜KASKAL⌝	?		X	cyl	LBWS	DAR I 21	Chandler 2021: 844–847 (PFS 1240*)
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1216*s)	-	accounting /auditing office?	⌜d⌝KASKAL⌝	impr.?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 22	Chandler 2021: 840–842 (PFS 1216*s)
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 813*)	-	-	⌜d⌝KASKAL⌝	?		X	cyl	LBWS	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 835–838 (PFS 813*) Garrison 2017: 31
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1205*s)	Mišdaya	*mudunup* ('horsemen')	dKASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 838–840 (PFS 1205*s)
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 161*s)	-	accounting /auditing office	dKASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	2 worshippers + object	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 826–829 (PFS 161*s) Garrison 2017: 354–356
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 451*s)	-	accounting /auditing office	d⌜KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 832–835 (PFS 451*s) Garrison 2017: 31, 71, 113
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1228*s)	-	*kurman* office	⌜x⌝	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 842–844 (PFS 1228*s)

[7] Balzer's (2007: chap. 16, 14) description of the scene does not equate with Bregstein's; the seal is poorly preserved.

City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1370*s)	-	-	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I	PFUTS 1370*s
Sippar (Ebabbar)	Nidintu	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL[8]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	CAMB 6	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A19a MacGinnis 1995: no. A19 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 377a (= nos. 378a, 379a, 391a, 393a, 395c, 398a, 410a, 431, 443, 447, 449, 451, 453, 454, 455, 456, 458, and 460a)
Sippar (Ebabbar)	Tabnēa	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 28	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A21 MacGinnis 1995: no. A21
Uruk	-	-	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	NERIG 3	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A304
unknown	-	-	^{d}[KASKAL]	?	X		stmp	LBWS	LB-ACH	Buchanan and Moorey 1988: 59, no. 369
unknown	-	-	^{d}KASKAL MEŠ[9]	impr.	X		stmp	LBWS	LB-ACH	Porada 1948: no. 799

Appendix 2b: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}KASKAL on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by date

See the comments and abbreviations in Appendix 2a.

Date	City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	References
NERIG 3	Uruk	-	-	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A304
CAMB 0	Nippur	-	-	$^{d\lceil}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Balzer 2007: no. H10b.2
CAMB 6	Sippar (Ebabbar)	Nidintu	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A19a MacGinnis 1995: no A19 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 377 (= nos. 378a, 379a, 391a, 393a, 395c, 398a, 410a, 431, 443, 447, 449, 451, 453, 454, 455, 456, 458, and 460a)

[8] There are problems in collating the multiple impressions of this seal; see Altavilla and Walker 2009: 38. Multiple inscription copies are given in Mitchell and Searight (2008). All but one, no. 460a, read ^{d}KASKAL, cut to be read in the stone. No. 460a appears to read $^{\lceil d\rceil}$PA$^{\rceil}$ PAP, cut to be read in impression. Given the confusion in the collation of the seal and the inherent difficulty of sorting through the various drawings in Mitchell and Searight (2008), it would be necessary to consult the tablets to clarify the situation.

[9] Oppenheim in Porada (1948: 179) read: AN.KI[B] / MEŠ or perhaps *Il-la*[*m*](?)-meš. There is certainly a MEŠ sign at the end of the inscription (on which, see the comments in text notes 75 and 76).

Date	City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	References
LB–ACH	Babylon	-	-	^{d}KASKAL ⌜x⌝	impr.	X		stmp	LBWS	Jacob-Rost 1997: no. 237 Lambert 1989: 543–544
LB–ACH	Babylon(?)	-	-	$^{[d]}$⌜KASKAL⌝	?		X	cyl	fragment with scorpion-man	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. GSM106
LB–ACH	unknown	-	-	^{d}[KASKAL]	?	X		stmp	LBWS	Buchanan and Moorey 1988: 59, no. 369
LB–ACH	unknown	-	-	^{d}KASKAL MEŠ	impr.	X		stmp	LBWS	Porada 1948: no. 799
DAR I 6	Nippur	Aplā	judge	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Balzer 2007: no. H7e.19 Clay 1908: no. 107
DAR I 9	Babylon	Ina-ṣilli-Esagil // Zēriya(?)	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	god with flowing waters	Baker 2004: 125 (tablet no. 44), 394 (no. 44)
DAR I 19	Borsippa (Ilia)	Marduk-šuma-ibni / Šulāya // Ilia	scribe/notary	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A157 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 425
DAR I 21	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1240*)	Mitrabada	*kanzabara* (travel)	$^{[d]}$⌜KASKAL⌝	?		X	cyl	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 844–847 (PFS 1240*)
DAR I 22	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1216*s)	-	accounting/ auditing office?	$^{⌜d⌝}$KASKAL	impr.?		X	stmp	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 840–842 (PFS 1216*s)
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 813*)	-	-	$^{⌜d⌝}$KASKAL	?		X	cyl	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 835–838 (PFS 813*) Garrison 2017: 31
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1205*s)	Mišdaya	*mudunup* ('horsemen')	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 838–840 (PFS 1205*s)
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 161*s)	-	accounting/ auditing office	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	2 worshippers + object	Chandler 2021: 826-29 (PFS 161*s) Garrison 2017: 354–56
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 451*s)	-	accounting/ auditing office	$^{d⌜}$KASKAL⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 832–835 (PFS 451*s) Garrison 2017: 31, 71, 113
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1228*s)	-	*kurman* office	⌜x⌝	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 842–844 (PFS 1228*s)
DAR I 28	Sippar (Ebabbar)	Tabnēa	*sepīru*	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. A21 MacGinnis 1995: no. A21

Date	City	Seal-user	Office	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	References
DAR I 32	Babylon	Ḫabaṣīru // Ea-eppēš-ilī	judge	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A321 Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 460a Wunsch 1995/96: 60 no. 10 (a copy of BM 33932)
DAR I 33	Babylon	Mušēzib-Bēl // Kiribtu	judge	^{d}KASKAL	stone		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A322
DAR I	Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1370*s)	-	-	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	PFUTS 1370*s
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{\lceil d \rceil}$KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 5
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}KASKAL	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 6
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{\lceil d}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 14
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{d\lceil}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 22 (=nos. 23 and 24)
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{[d]\lceil}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.?		X	stmp	worshipper before creature	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 28
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{d\lceil}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 32
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}KASKAL	stone		X	stmp	hero-combat	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 46
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{\lceil d}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	?		X	stmp	hero-control	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 52
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{d\lceil}$KASKAL$^{\rceil}$	impr.		X	stmp	hero-control	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 53
ARTA I	Babylon	Nidintu-Nabû	scribe	^{d}KASKAL MIN$^{?}$	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 3 Balzer 2007: no. H8abd.1
DAR II 0	Nippur (Murašû)	Sangilu // Bēl-bullissu	-	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	worshipper + scorpion-man	Bregstein 1993: no. 232 Balzer 2007: no. H4j.4
DAR II 2	Nippur (Murašû)	Šulum-Bābili // Bēl-ittia	*paqdu* of Artaumanu	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Bregstein 1993: no. 222 Balzer 2007: no. H4u.12
DAR II 3	Nippur (Murašû)	Bēl-erība // Bēl-ēṭir	-	^{d}KASKAL	impr.?		X	stmp	LBWS	Bregstein 1993: no. 217 Balzer 2007: no. H4s.2
DAR II 5	Nippur (Murašû)	Bēl-ēṭir // Bēl-bullissu	*rab kāri ša* LUGAL	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Bregstein 1993: no. 219 Balzer 2007: no. E3f.6
DAR II 6	Nippur (Murašû)	Bēlšunu // Marduka	-	^{d}KASKAL	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Bregstein 1993: no. 225 Balzer 2007: no. H4u.7
ARTA II/III	Babylon (Esangila)	-	-	$^{[d]}\lceil$KASKAL$^{\rceil ?}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A327a

Appendix 3a: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI / ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-šá (and variants) on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by provenance

This inscriptional formula occurs in several variants, which the reader may track in the chart. One major variant replaces ^{d}PA PAP with ^{d}AMAR.UTU (Marduk). Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 207–210) publish many of these seals and the readings of the inscriptions in their Table 1. I have followed their readings except where noted. I include in Appendices 3a and 3b the abbreviated variant ^{d}PA. There are in addition four stamp seals that have preserved only a DINGIR sign. The inscriptions on these seals thus could be ^{d}PA or simply DINGIR.[10]

See also the comments and abbreviations in Appendix 2a.

Chronological Abbreviations (number after ruler's name in chart indicates regnal year):

ACH	Achaemenid 522/521–331 BCE
ARTA I	Artaxerxes I 465–424 BCE
ARTA II	Artaxerxes II 404–359/358 BCE
ARTA III	Artaxerxes III 359/358–338/337 BCE
CAMB	Cambyses 530–522 BCE
CYR	Cyrus 539–530 BCE
DAR I	Darius I 522/521–486 BCE
DAR II	Darius II 423–404 BCE
DAR III	Darius III 338/337–331 BCE
LB	626–539 BCE
LB-ACH	Late Babylonian – Achaemenid
NBN	Nabonidus 556–539 BCE
NERIG	Neriglissar 560–556 BCE
Neo-Ass	Neo-Assyrian 883–612 BCE
PIIIArr	Philip III Arridaeus: 323–316 BCE

[10] See Ehrenberg 1999: no. 80; Ehrenberg 2000a: nos. 55 and 59; Chandler 2021: 814–816 (PFATS 34*s).

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Babylon	Marduk-šākin-šumi // URÙ.DÙ-mansum	judge	^{d}PA *ú-ṣur* Z[I-*tì*] *ina* u_4*-me dan-n*[*a-tì*] *at-ta* ⌜*lu*⌝-[*ú re-ṣí*?]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	NERIG	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A109 Wunsch 2000b: 578 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Babylon	Nabû-zēru-lišir // Šamaš-abāri	notary	NA_4.KIŠIB ^{md}N[*a-bi-um*]-NUMUN-*li-ši-*[*ir* (LÚ.DUB.SAR)] [DU]MU ^{md}UTU-*ba-*[*a-ri*] ^{d}AMAR.UTU *ú-*[*ṣur*] [Z]I TIN BA-[*šá*]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	NBN 3	Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 7.2 Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A125 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
Babylon	Bēl-ušallim // Ea-eppēš-ilī	notary	^{d}PA TIN [PAB] ZI-*tì* [BA]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	NBN 12	Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A132 Wunsch 2000a: LE of tablet no. 120 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Babylon	Libūru // Nabûnnāya	notary	⌜^{d}PA PAP⌝ [ZI]	stone		X	cyl	LBWS	CYR 4	Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 6.1 Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. B116
Babylon?	-	-	^{d}PA?	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	LB-ACH	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 340 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. B207
Babylon (Nappāḫu)	Nidinti-Marduk / Itti-Nabû-balāṭu // Rab-banê[11]	-	[...] ⌜^{d}⌝AMAR.UTU	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru* + scorpion-man	DAR I 21	Baker 2004: 97–98 (tablet no. 12), 390 (no. 12a) Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A158a
Babylon	Lâbâši-Marduk // Rab-līmi	judge	[^{d}]PA TI[N BA] PAB [ZI]	stone		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	DAR I 32	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A166
Babylon	Ina-tēšê- ēṭir // Nabû-mukīn-apli	judge	^{d}PA P[AB ZI TIN BA]-*šá*	impr.		X	stmp	symbols	DAR I	Graziani 1989: no. 21 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. GMM202
Babylon	-	-	^{d}PA PAP [...][12]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	ARTA I 32	Balzer 2007: no. H8y.5 Klengel-Brandt 1969: 334, pl. 62 no. 4
Babylon	-	-	[^{d}]⌜PA⌝ ZI [PA]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS	DAR II/III	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A203

[11] See the comments of Altavilla Walker 2016: 134.
[12] Reading by the author.

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Babylon (Nappāḫu)	-	-	˹d˺AMAR.UT[U]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru* + scorpion-man	ACH	Baker 2004: 301 (tablet no. 265), 412 (no. 265)
Babylonia	-	-	dPA	impr.		X	stmp	winged lion	LB-ACH	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 333
Borsippa	Bēl-ile'i-kalâma / Nabû-būn-šūtur // Rīšû'a	scribe/notary	dPA PAB Z[I TIN] BA-[*šá*] dKASKAL[13]	stone		X	cyl	worshipper with bucket	CYR 6	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A139 Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 8 Balzer 2007: no. H9a.2 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Borsippa?	-	-	dPA [...]	stone		X	stmp	?	LB-ACH	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. Q204
Borsippa (Kasr)[14]	Nabû-nādin-aḫi / Iddin-Nabû // [...]	scribe/notary	dPA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* dKASKAL MIN?[15]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	ARTA I 26	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1 Delaporte 1920: A. 800, pl. 121, 2a–b Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A193 Balzer 2007: no. H8abg.1 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Borsippa (Kasr)[16]	Nabû-nādin-aḫi / Iddin-Nabû // [...]	scribe/notary	dPA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* dKASKAL MIN?[17]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	ARTA I	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 2 Balzer 2007: no. H8abg.1 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A194 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Borsippa?[18]	Lâbāši (rē'û) / Mar-bīti-ēṭir // Bēl?-[...]	-	dPA	impr.		X	ring	worshipper with bucket	PIIIArr	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 607 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. J266
Cutha(?)[19]	Nergal-zēru-ibni // Sîn-šadûnu	*šākin ṭēm Kutê*	dPA URU_3 ZI TIN BA-*šá* NA_4.KIŠIB dU.GUR-NUMUN-DÙ LU_2.GAR. UMUŠ GU_2.DU_8.A.KI A md30-KUR-*nu*	stone	X		cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	LB–ACH	Watanabe 1995: 230 von der Osten 1936: no. 132 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210

[13] This reading is from Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209; Altavilla and Walker (2016: 130) read d.PA PAB Z[I] / ˹TIN BA˺ / d.DUḪxDUḪ.
[14] Altavilla and Walker (2016: 139) state that the seal occurs at both Babylon and Borsippa and (2016: 49) that the tablets are part of the Kasr archive.
[15] Bregstein (1993: 105 note 162): MIN sign written through the middle of the KASKAL sign. Balzer (2007) identifies two separate seals, his nos. H8abg.10 and H8abg.11: H8abg.10 = the seal published as Menant 1886: 40–41, fig. 51; H8abg.11 = the seal published as Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1. Altavilla and Walker (2016: 49) indicate that these tablets carry the same seal, their A193 (= Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1).
[16] Altavilla and Walker (2016: 49, 139) indicate that this seal occurs only at Babylon and the tablet is part of the Kasr archive; other commentators locate the seal at Borsippa.
[17] Cf. Appendix 2a, notes 195, 198, and 202.
[18] Altavilla and Walker (2016: 232) suggest that the tablet is from Borsippa; Mitchell and Searight (2008: 187) indicate simply Babylonia.
[19] Reiche and Sandowicz (2009: 210) attribute this seal to the site of Cutha based upon the contents of the inscription.

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}[...]	impr.		X	stmp	heraldic caprids	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 55 (= nos. 56 and 57)
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}[...]	impr.?		X	stmp	heraldic caprids	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 59
Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	$^{\lceil d\rceil}$PA$^{?}$ ZI$^{?}$ x$^{\rceil}$ TIN BA[20]	impr.		X	stmp	worshipper + lamp	DAR I	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 20
Kalḫu	-	-	^{d}AG ZI *ú-ṣúr-š*$^{\lceil}$*u*$^{?\rceil}$ TI BA	stone		X	cyl	winged disk	Neo-Assy.	Watanabe 1993: no. 10.01 Herbordt 1992: no. Nrd 135, pl. 1 (no. 2) Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 108*)	-	accounting office	^{d}PA PAB $^{\lceil}$ZI$^{\rceil}$	stone		X	cyl	heraldic winged human-faced caprids	DAR I 18	Garrison 2000: 146, fig. 24, pl. 25 (PFS 108*) Chandler 2021: 816–822 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1632*)	Raubasa	-	$^{\lceil d\rceil}$AMAR.UTU PAB [...] BA-ŠÁ ^{d}[...][21]	stone		X	cyl	hero-combat	DAR I 18	Garrison and Root 2001: Cat.No. 244 (PFS 1632*) Chandler 2021: 847–849 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
Persepolis (PFA – PFS 289*s)	Miramana	-	^{d}PA [PAP] $^{\lceil}$ZI x$^{\rceil}$[22]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	DAR I 22	Chandler 2021: 829–832 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Persepolis (PFA-PFATS 34*s)	-	-	$^{\lceil d\rceil}$[...]	?		X	stmp	LBWS	DAR I 27	Chandler 2021: 814–816 (PFATS 34*s)
Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1254*)	-	-	$^{\lceil d\rceil}$PA PAP $^{\lceil}$x$^{\rceil}$ $^{\lceil}$ZI TIN BA$^{\rceil}$	impr.?		X	cyl	hero-control	DAR I	PFUTS 1254*
Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 219*)	-	-	^{d}PA PAP ZI $^{\lceil}$TIN$^{\rceil}$ BA	stone		X	cyl	hero-control	DAR I	Chandler 2021: 849–852 (PFUTS 219*)

[20] The reading is by the author. The DINGIR at the beginning of the inscription and the TIN BA at the end are clear. The signs in-between are broken and, perhaps, misunderstood.

[21] This reading differs from that given in both Garrison and Root (2001) and Chandler (2021), but it remains quite uncertain. The text appears to be similar to what we see at the end of the inscription on a seal from the Acropole archive at Susa (see below, Amiet 1973: no. 6). The signs on PFS 1632* are, however, out of order and we lack a TIN (but we do not have the whole of the inscription).

[22] Chandler suggests reading the last sign as MEŠ (see Lambert 1989: 543–544). Cf. the broken sign preserved on Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 331.

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1218*s)	-	-	˹d˺PA PAP ˹ZI TIN BA˺	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	DAR I	PFUTS 1218*s
Sippar	(Marduk)-nāṣir	-	dPA [...]	impr.?		X	cyl	hero-combat	NBN 7	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. E01a
Sippar	-	-	dPA?	?		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	CAMB 2	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. B27
Sippar	-	-	dPA	impr.		X	stmp	worshipper with bucket	ACH	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 523a
Susa (acropole)	-	-	*ina* PAB.ḪAL-*qí u* KAL-*t*[*i*] KAR-*an-ni* dAMAR.UTU dPA PAB ZI TIN ˹BA˺	stone		X	cyl	worship stylized tree	LB?/ Neo-Elamite?[23]	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.16 Amiet 1973: no. 6 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
(Susa)[24]	-	-	dPA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	LB–ACH	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.13 Delaporte 1920: pl. 52, no. 14 (D.83) Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
(Susa)	-	-	d30 PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		stmp	hero-combat; inscription on side seal	LB–ACH	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.15 Delaporte 1920: pl. 54, no. 13 (D.82) Dieulafoy 1893: 438, figs. 355–356 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
Uruk (Eanna)	Ilī-rēmanni	*bēl piqitti* Eanna	˹d˺PA PAB ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	NBN 14	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 62 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	Nabû-aḫ-iddin	*bēl piqitti* Eanna	dPA [PAB] ˹ZI˺	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	NBN 17	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 39 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[dPA PAB] ˹ZI˺ TIN ˹BA˺[25]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	CYR 1	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 44 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209

[23] Watanabe (1995: 225) classifies this seal and others that she includes in her important study to the Neo-Babylonian and Late Babylonian periods collectively; she does not specify pre- or post-date 626 BCE for any individual seal. For consistency, I have dated most of these seals to the Late Babylonian period or more generally Late Babylonian-Achaemenid, but one should leave open the possibility that a few of the seals that appear in Watanabe (1995) pre-date 626 BCE. Amiet 1973: 8–9, no. 6 dated his seal no. 6 from the Susa Acropole archive to the 7th century; Garrison (2018: 649–50) suggests a date in the 6th century BCE. A few of the seals in Watanabe (1995) I suggest date to the Neo-Assyrian period.

[24] The two seals marked (Susa) are part of the Collection Dieulafoy at the Louvre. Dieulafoy (1893: 438) stated that the seals were discovered or purchased at Susa or purchased at Baghdad. See Watanabe 1995: no. 1.15.

[25] This reading is from Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209; Ehrenberg (1999: 56) read ˹MEŠ˺-TIN at lower left with PA below the worshipper's feet.

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	⌜[d]⌝PA⌝ [PAB] ⌜ZI⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	CYR 4	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 45 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[[d]]PA [PAB] ⌜ZI⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	CAMB 1	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 48 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[d][PA]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	CYR(?)	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 80 Balzer 2007: no. H8y.2
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[d]PA PAB [ZI]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	LB–ACH	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 56 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	⌜[d]⌝PA PAB⌝ ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	ACH	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 54 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	ACH	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 55 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	impr.	X		cyl	hero-combat	Neo-Assy.	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.02 Collon 2001: no. 320 Wittmann 1992: no. 85 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI TIN BA-šá	stone	X		cyl	worship stylized tree	Neo-Assy./ LB?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.12 Wittmann 1992: no. 114 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI ⌜TIN BA⌝	stone	X		cyl	worship stylized tree	Neo-Assy./ LB	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.04 Moortgat 1940: no. 607 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	LB	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.03 Collon 2001: no. 347 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	LB	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.01 Collon 2001: no. 348 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]PA PAB ZI TIN BA-šá	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat + worshipper	LB	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.05 Wittmann 1992: no. 102 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	-	-	[d]AMAR.UTU *ú-⌜ṣur⌝* ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	LB	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.07 Wittmann 1992: no. 62 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207

City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	Seal type	Scene	Date	References
unknown	Nabû-nādin-šumi // Ēdu-ēṭir	-	*šá* ^{md}PA-SUM.NA-MU DUMU ^{m}DILI-SUR ^{d}PA PAB ZI$^{!}$ TIN BA-*eš*	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	LB?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.08 Wittmann 1992: no. 63 Porada 1948: no. 747 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
unknown	-	-	^{d}AMAR.UTU PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat + stylized tree	LB?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.09 Wittmann 1992: no. 67 von der Osten 1936: no. 129 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	LB?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.11 Wittmann 1994: no. N2 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	Aḫūnu	-	⌜*šá*⌝ ^{m}*A-ḫu-nu* ^{d}AMAR.UTU PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	LB–ACH?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.10 Wittmann 1992: no. 73 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
unknown	Nabû-aḫu-iddin	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* NA_4.KIŠIB ^{md}PA-PAB-MU A ^{md}PA-GIN-A	stone	X		cyl	LBWS + palm + creature	LB–ACH?	Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 195-206, 212-214
unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ⌜ZI TIN⌝ BA-[*šá*]	stone	X		stmp	LBWS; inscription on side seal	LB–ACH	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.14 Porada 1948: no. 795 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
unknown	Ninurta-aḫu-iddin	-	^{md}MAŠ-PAB-AŠ ^{d}PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	combat/hunt?	LB–ACH	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.06 Collon 2001: no. 216 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207

Appendix 3b: Attestations of the inscription ^{d}PA PAP ZI / ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-šá (and variants) on seals from the principal published archives from Babylonia and Persepolis as well as on a few unprovenanced seals, organized by date

See the comments and abbreviations in Appendices 2a and 3a.

Date	City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	C/S	Scene	Reference
Neo-Assy.	Kalḫu	-	-	^{d}AG ZI *ú-ṣúr-šu*? TI BA!	stone		X	cyl	winged disk	Watanabe 1993: no. 10.01 Herbordt 1992: no. Nrd 135, pl. 1 (no. 2) Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
Neo-Assy.	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	impr.	X		cyl	hero-combat	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.02 Collon 2001: no. 320 Wittmann 1992: no. 85 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
Neo-Assy./LB?	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	worship stylized tree	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.12 Wittmann 1992: no. 114 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
Neo-Assy./LB	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI ⌜TIN BA⌝	stone	X		cyl	worship stylized tree	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.04 Moortgat 1940: no. 607 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
NERIG	Babylon	Marduk-šākin-šumi // URÙ.DÙ-mansum	judge	^{d}PA *ú-ṣur* Z[I-*tì*] *ina* u_4-*me dan-n*[*a-tì*] *at-ta* ⌜*lu*⌝-[*ú re-ṣí*?]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A109 Wunsch 2000b: 578 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
NBN 3	Babylon	Nabû-zēru-līšir // Šamaš-abāri	notary	NA_4.KIŠIB ^{md}N[*a-bi-um*]- NUMUN-*li-ši-*[*ir* (LÚ.DUB.SAR)] [DU]MU ^{md}UTU-*ba-*[*a-ri*] ^{d}AMAR.UTU *ú-*[*ṣur*] [Z]I TIN BA-[šá]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 7.2 Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A125 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
NBN 7	Sippar	(Marduk)-nāṣir	-	^{d}PA [...]	impr.?		X	cyl	hero-combat	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. E01a
NBN 12	Babylon	Bēl-ušallim // Ea-eppēš-ilī	notary	^{d}PA TIN [PAB] ZI-*tì* [BA]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A132 Wunsch 2000a: LE of tablet no. 120 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
NBN 14	Uruk (Eanna)	Ilī-rēmanni	*bēl piqitti* Eanna	⌜d⌝PA PAB ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 62 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
NBN 17	Uruk (Eanna)	Nabû-aḫ-iddin	*bēl piqitti* Eanna	^{d}PA [PAB] ⌜ZI⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 39 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210

Date	City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	C/S	Scene	Reference
LB	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.03 Collon 2001: no. 347 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.01 Collon 2001: no. 348 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat + worshipper	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.05 Wittmann 1992: no. 102 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB	unknown	-	-	^{d}AMAR.UTU *ú-*⌜*ṣur*⌝ ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.07 Wittmann 1992: no. 62 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
LB?	unknown	Nabû-nādin-šumi // Ēdu-ēṭir	-	*šá* ^{md}PA-SUM.NA-MU DUMU ^{m}DILI-SUR ^{d}PA PAB ZI$^{!}$ TIN BA-*eš*	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.08 Wittmann 1992: no. 63 Porada 1948: no. 747 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
LB?	unknown	-	-	^{d}AMAR.UTU PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat + stylized tree	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.09 Wittmann 1992: no. 67 von de Osten 1936: no. 129 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
LB?	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.11 Wittmann 1994: no. N2 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB?/ Neo-Elamite?	Susa (acropole)	-	-	*ina* PAB.ḪAL-*qí u* KAL-*t*[*i*] KAR-*an-ni* ^{d}AMAR.UTU ^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN ⌜BA⌝	stone		X	cyl	worship stylized tree	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.16 Amiet 1973: no. 6 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
LB–ACH	Cutha(?)	Nergal-zēru-ibni // Sîn-šadûnu	*šākin ṭēm Kutê*	^{d}PA URU$_{3}$ ZI TIN BA-*šá* NA$_{4}$.KIŠIB ^{d}U.GUR-NUMUN-DÙ LU$_{2}$.GAR.UMUŠ GU$_{2}$.DU$_{8}$.A.KI A ^{md}30-KUR-*nu*	stone	X		cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Watanabe 1995: 230 von der Osten 1936: no. 132 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
LB–ACH	Babylon?	-	-	^{d}PA$^{?}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 340 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. B207
LB–ACH	Babylonia	-	-	^{d}PA	impr.		X	stmp	winged lion	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 333

Date	City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	C/S	Scene	Reference
LB–ACH	Borsippa?	-	-	^{d}PA [...]	stone		X	stmp	?	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. Q204
LB–ACH	(Susa)	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	hero-combat	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.13 Delaporte 1920: pl. 52, no. 14 (D.83) Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
LB–ACH	(Susa)	-	-	^{d}30 PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		stmp	hero-combat; inscription on side seal	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.15 Delaporte 1920: pl. 54, no. 13 (D.82) Dieulafoy 1893: 438, figs. 355–356 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB–ACH	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	^{d}PA PAB [ZI]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 56 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
LB–ACH	unknown	Ninurta-aḫu-iddin	-	^{md}MAŠ-PAB-AŠ ^{d}PAB ZI TIN BA	stone	X		cyl	combat/hunt?	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.06 Collon 2001: no. 216 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
LB–ACH	unknown	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ⌜ZI TIN⌝ BA-[*šá*]	stone	X		stmp	LBWS; inscription on side seal	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.14 Porada 1948: no. 795 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 208
LB–ACH?	unknown	Nabû-aḫu-iddin	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* NA$_4$.KIŠIB ^{md}PA-PAB-MU A ^{md}PA-GIN-A	stone	X		cyl	LBWS + palm + creature	Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 195–206, 212–214
LB–ACH?	unknown	Aḫūnu	-	⌜*šá*⌝ ^{m}*A-ḫu-nu* ^{d}AMAR.UTU PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá*	stone	X		cyl	hero-control	Watanabe 1995: no. 1.10 Wittmann 1992: no. 73 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
CYR 1	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[^{d}PA PAB] ⌜ZI⌝ TIN ⌜BA⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 44 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
CYR 4	Babylon	Libūru // Nabûnnāya	notary	⌜^{d}PA PAB⌝ [ZI]	stone		X	cyl	LBWS	Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 6.1 Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. B116
CYR 4	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	⌜^{d}PA⌝ [PAB] ⌜ZI⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 45 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
CYR 6	Borsippa	Bēl-ile’ i-kalâma / Nabû-būn-šūtur // Rīšû’a	scribe/ notary	^{d}PA PAB Z[I TIN] BA-[*šá*] ^{d}KASKAL?	stone		X	cyl	worshipper with bucket	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A139 Baker and Wunsch 2001: fig. 8 Balzer 2007: no. H9a.2 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
CYR(?)	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	^{d}[PA]	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 80 Balzer 2007: no. H8y.2

Date	City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	C/S	Scene	Reference
CAMB 1	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	[^{d}]PA [PAB] ⌜ZI⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 48 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
CAMB 2	Sippar	-	-	^{d}PA$^{?}$	?		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Altavilla and Walker 2009: no. B27
DAR I 18	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 108*)	-	accounting office	^{d}PA PAB ⌜ZI⌝	stone		X	cyl	heraldic winged human-faced caprids	Garrison 2000: 146, fig. 24, pl. 25 (PFS 108*) Chandler 2021: 816–822 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
DAR I 18	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 1632*)	Raubasa	-	⌜d⌝AMAR.UTU PAB [...] BA-ŠÁ ^{d}[...]	stone		X	cyl	hero-combat	Garrison and Root 2001: Cat.No. 244 (PFS 1632*) Chandler 2021: 847–849 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 207
DAR I 21	Babylon (Nappāḫu)	Nidinti-Marduk / Itti-Nabû-balāṭu // Rab-banê	-	[...]⌜d⌝AMAR.UTU	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru* + scorpion-man	Baker 2004: 97–98 (tablet no. 12), 390 (no. 12a) Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A158a
DAR I 22	Persepolis (PFA – PFS 289*s	Miramana	-	^{d}PA [PAP] ⌜ZI x⌝	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	Chandler 2021: 829–832 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
DAR I 27	Persepolis (PFA – PFATS 34*s	-	-	^{d}[...]	?		X	stmp	LBWS	Chandler 2021: 814–816 (PFATS 34*s)
DAR I 32	Babylon	Lâbâši-Marduk // Rab-līmi	judge	[^{d}]PA TI[N BA] PAB [ZI]	stone		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A166
DAR I	Babylon	Ina-tēšê-ēṭir // Nabû-mukīn-apli	judge	^{d}PA P[AB ZI TIN BA]-*šá*	impr.		X	stmp	symbols	Graziani 1989: no. 21 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}[...]	impr.		X	stmp	heraldic caprids	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 55 (= nos. 56 and 57)
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	^{d}[...]	impr.?		X	stmp	heraldic caprids	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 59
DAR I	Hafudh(?)	-	sealing	⌜d⌝PA$^{?}$ ZI$^{?}$ x⌝ TIN BA	impr.		X	stmp	worshipper + lamp	Ehrenberg 2000a: no. 20
DAR I	Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1254*)	-	-	⌜d⌝PA PAP ⌜x⌝ ⌜ZI TIN BA⌝	impr.?		X	cyl	hero-control	PFUTS 1254*

Date	City	User	Func.	Inscription	Read	Seal	Impr.	C/S	Scene	Reference
DAR I	Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 219*)	-	-	^{d}PA PAP ZI $^{\ulcorner}$TIN$^{\urcorner}$ BA	stone		X	cyl	hero-control	Chandler 2021: 849-852 (PFUTS 219*)
DAR I	Persepolis (PFA – PFUTS 1218*s)	-	-	$^{\ulcorner d \urcorner}$PA PAP $^{\ulcorner}$ZI TIN BA$^{\urcorner}$	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS *kudurru*	PFUTS 1218*s
ARTA I 26	Borsippa (Kasr)	Nabû-nādin-aḫi / Iddin-Nabû // [...]	scribe/ notary	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* ^{d}KASKAL MIN$^{?}$	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 1 Delaporte 1920: A.800, pl. 121, 2a–b Altavilla-Walker 2016: no. A193 Balzer 2007: no. H8abg.11 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
ARTA I 32	Babylon	-	-	^{d}PA PAP [...]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Balzer 2007: no. H8y.5 Klengel-Brandt 1969: 334, pl. 62 no. 4
ARTA I	Borsippa (Kasr)	Nabû-nādin-aḫi / Iddin-Nabû // [...]	scribe/ notary	^{d}PA PAB ZI TIN BA-*šá* ^{d}KASKAL MIN$^{?}$	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru*	Klengel-Brandt 1969: Abb. 2 Balzer 2007: no. H8abg.1 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A194 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 209
DAR II/III	Babylon	-	-	[^{d}]$^{\ulcorner}$PA$^{\urcorner}$ ZI [PA]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS	Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. A203
ACH	Babylon (Nappāḫu)	-	-	$^{\ulcorner d \urcorner}$AMAR.UT[U]	impr.		X	cyl	LBWS *kudurru* + scorpion-man	Baker 2004: 301 (tablet no. 265), 412 (no. 265)
ACH	Sippar	-	-	^{d}PA	impr.		X	stmp	worshipper with bucket	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 523a
ACH	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	$^{\ulcorner d}$PA PAB$^{\urcorner}$ ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 54 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
ACH	Uruk (Eanna)	-	-	^{d}PA PAB ZI	impr.		X	stmp	LBWS	Ehrenberg 1999: no. 55 Reiche and Sandowicz 2009: 210
PIIIArr	Borsippa?	Lâbâši (rē'û) / Mar-bîti-ēṭir // Bēl?-[...]	-	^{d}PA	impr.		X	ring	worshipper with bucket	Mitchell and Searight 2008: no. 607 Altavilla and Walker 2016: no. J266

Appendix 4: List of seals in Appendix 1 where the seal-user can be identified

Travellers on the royal road receiving ration allocations	Officials and offices embedded in the PFA agency
PFS 116s (Dattanna) PFS 262s (Uštana) PFS 279s (Umišduma, a *barrišdama* [‘travel guide’]) PFS 289*s (Miramana) PFS 1037s (Bakabada) PFS 1205*s (Mišdaya?) PFS 1240* (Mitrabada [Miššabada?] a *kanzabara* [‘treasurer]) PFS 1283s (Hitibel) PFS 1333s (Kilašuši) PFS 1414s (Tuzza and/or Mannini) PFS 1426s (Simamira) PFS 1687s (Umišduma) PFS 2178s (Pirraduš) PFS 2804s (Darbarat) PFS 3117s (Mitlisep) PFS 3317s (Hana[...]?)	PFS 186s (Barikila, an auditor, the same individual who uses PFS 2907s) PFS 273s (*kurman* office seal, at Hišema) PFS 451*s (Beltin, a *mušin zikkira* [‘account writer,’ ‘accountant’) PFS 1140s (Bakadada?) PFS 1216*s (Dattanna, Pirraddakka, and Ištinka, probably an accounting office seal) PFS 1228*s (*kurman* office seal) PFS 2163 (Kurratikka?) PFS 2365s (perhaps a *kurman* office seal) PFS 2819s (*kurman*, Ba[...]ma) PFS 2907s (Barikila, the same individual who uses PFS 186s) PFS 3025s (accountant) PFS 3059s (Datiya, a *pirradazziš* [‘fast messenger’]) PFS 3064s (Karkašša?) PFS 3138s (Dattanna)

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Chapter 36:
A new look at the Hittite silver vessel in the shape of a fist[1]

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Abstract. The silver vessel in the form of a fist, today at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is one of the few artifacts in precious metal that have survived from the Hittite world. While several studies have already been devoted to it, questions remain concerning the identity of the main god depicted on the relief around the cuff and his relationship with the rest of the piece. Combining iconographic analysis with a survey of Hittite texts, this paper proposes to identify the deity with Teššub of Aleppo and argues that the fingerless gauntlet covering the hand either represents a boxing glove or an element of the god's armor meant to protect the hand from the pressure of the bull's reins.

Keywords: Hittite figural vessels, *BIBRÛ* GÉŠPU, storm-god of Aleppo, glove, Tudḫaliya III.

Introduction

Prof. Tallay Ornan introduced me to the material culture of the ancient Near East. It is also under her direction that I wrote my master's thesis, during which I became acquainted with the fist-shaped vessel. Prof. Ornan and I discussed the piece several times, and she was the first to pinpoint some of the issues examined in this article. It is hence with great pleasure and gratitude that I offer her my latest reflections on the subject, with the hope that they will meet her high academic standards and contribute to sustain her long-standing interest for the art of ancient Anatolia.

The silver vessel in the form of a fist exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, (accession no. 2004.2230; Figure 1) is one of the few luxurious artifacts that remain from Hittite Anatolia. Originally purchased on the art market, the piece was lent to the Museum in 1977 and finally donated in 2004.[2] It is 16.3 cm high on the thumb side, 12.5 cm on that of the small finger and the circumference of the mouth is about 28 cm.[3] Güterbock and Kendall, who formally introduced the vessel to the academic world in 1995, dated it to the first half of the 14th century BCE, i.e. to the reign of Tudḫaliya III (1995: 56–57).

The fist belongs to a class of cultic implements commonly referred to in Hittite cuneiform texts as *BIBRÛ*, an Akkadogram originally meaning "bird" that came to designate figural vessels in general (Carruba 1967: 88–89; Güterbock 1983: 212–214; Koehl 2013: 240–241).[4] As attested by the numerous terracotta examples found in excavations at Kültepe-Kaneš, Alacahöyük and Boğazköy, the *BIBRÛ* was one of the specialties of Anatolian craftsmen in the second millennium BCE.[5] To this day, seven pieces made in metal have been recovered, constituting the luxurious range of this tradition.[6]

Like other figurative vessels in precious metal, the Boston fist has received wide attention and generated numerous studies. Güterbock and Kendall explored several aspects of the vessel, providing notably a detailed description of its components, a discussion on the Sumerogram GÉŠPU, "fist(-shaped vessel)", and a possible dating (1995: 46–57). They were followed by Schuol (2004) and Savaş (2008) who both offered new

[1] I would like to thank Benjamin Sass and Laura Battini for kindly proposing that I contribute to this volume in honor of Tallay Ornan. I am also grateful to Prof. Suzanne Herbordt and to Prof. Amir Gilan, as well as to the anonymous reviewer for their numerous corrections and insightful comments. Naturally, I bear sole responsibility for the mistakes that may be found in the present essay. The completion of this article was supported by the Israel Science Foundation, grant no. 2176/22, "Colors and their Meaning in Hittite Religion." Abbreviations follow *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1980–2019).

[2] See the provenance section on the Museum's webpage (https://collections.mfa.org/objects/322343/drinking-vessel-in-the-shape-of-a-fist?ctx=fe375273-af6d-44db-b9b9-3470a05a2da9&idx=0), as well as Güterbock and Kendall's introductory remarks (1995: 45–46).

[3] These measurements and others are provided by Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 47.

[4] Regarding the equivalence between *BIBRÛ* and Hittite *ḫal(u/i)wani-*, see HED H: 51–52; HW² Ḫ: 89–90, esp. 3b; Weeden 2011: 178–179.

[5] A sample of the finds from Kültepe-Kaneš is available, for instance, in Özgüç 2002. For a recent overview of the Hittite production, see Pilavcı 2017: 144–171, cat. nos. 58–94.

[6] It includes in addition to the fist-shaped vessel, the silver stag and bull protomes from the Schimmel collection (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession nos. 1989.281.10/11; see Muscarella 1974: 123–124, more recently van den Hout 2018), three bull-headed cups from Kınık (Kastamonu Museum, inv. 937–939; see Emre and Çınaroğlu 1993: 676–677, figs. 1–3, pls. 127–129, and now Yıldırım *et al.* 2021: 32–36, 46, fig. 1) and the silver vase in the form of a stag discovered by Heinrich Schliemann at Mycenae (National Archaeological Museum, Athens, inv. no. 388; see Koehl 1995). I have examined these pieces altogether in an unpublished master's thesis, "Cult images and cult objects in Hittite Anatolia: the case of the figurative vessels in precious metal" written under the direction of Prof. Tallay Ornan (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2020).

Figure 1. The Hittite silver vessel in the shape of a fist. Photograph © 2023 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (accession number 2002.2230). Courtesy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

interpretations of the scene in relief depicted around the wrist. Since then, the silver cup has been mentioned in a broad range of works dealing, for instance, with hunting in Hittite Anatolia, the agency of cultic vessels or the iconography of the Hittite king.[7]

Notwithstanding the aforementioned studies, our understanding of this artifact remains incomplete. Several components of the frieze have not yet been securely identified, most notably the deity in honor of whom the ceremony is held and who is located at the left end of the row. While his pose and attributes clearly indicate that he is a storm-god, scholars disagree as to what hypostasis of this deity he represents: Güterbock and Kendall identified him as the Hittite storm-god (1995: 47–49), whereas Schuol opted for the storm-god

[7] Recent works mentioning the Boston fist include Pilavcı 2017: 166–169, 182–183, cat. no. 92; Görke and Kozal 2018: 1674, fig. 15; Michel 2018: 274; van den Hout 2018: 120–123; Durusu-Tanrıöver 2019: 296; Simon 2019: 144–146; Kozal 2023.

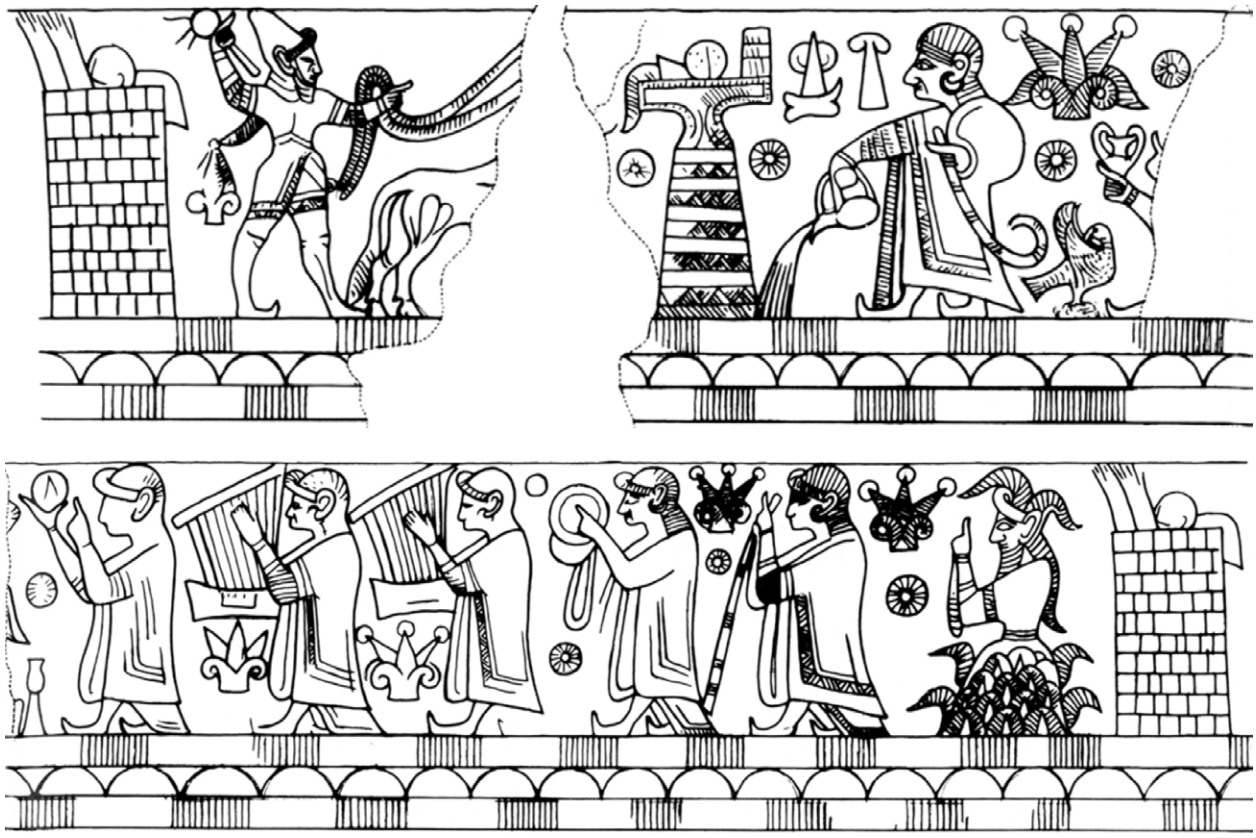

Figure 2. Drawing of the scene in relief. After Güterbock and Kendall 1995: fig. 3.7. Courtesy of T. Kendall.

of Zippalanda (2004: 328–333). The characteristics of this figure, however, may support a third alternative, explored in the present article.

Another unsettled issue concerns the shape of the vessel and its significance. Güterbock and Kendall remarked that gods and votaries are commonly depicted in Hittite art with one or both hands clenched, "a kind of reverential salute" which the metalsmith would have transposed here into a sculpture in the round (1995: 55). Canby contended that the fist-shaped vessel is in fact the representation of a hand wrapped in a falconer's glove (2002: 169–170). Other interpretations could nevertheless be proposed that would take into account the relationship between the vessel and the divinity to whom it was dedicated.[8]

The reexamination of the Boston fist in light of archaeological finds and Hittite cuneiform texts will help us clarify these issues. After a short presentation of the frieze in relief, we will try to identify the main deity depicted on it; then we will focus on the form of the vessel. Other important questions regarding the Boston fist, primarily its dating and origin, will be addressed at the end of this article.

The vessel and its frieze

The vessel comprises the sculpture of a clenched fist extending into a flared cup, hammered from a single sheet of almost pure silver (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 46 and note 4). Anatomically speaking, two parts can be distinguished – the hand, and the wrist around which a 2.8 cm high frieze is worked in *repoussé* and chasing techniques (Figure 2). Despite its good state of preservation, the relief retains two major lacunae, one between the figure standing at the extreme left of the scene and the offering table, and another between the first worshipper and the rest of the row.

The frieze depicts a cultic ceremony, as can be inferred from the presence of several groups interacting by means of ritualistic gestures and actions. It includes from left to right, a tower-like structure,[9] a storm-god

[8] In the case of the silver stag *BIBRÛ* from the Schimmel collection the vessel represents the attribute animal of the god who, on the frieze, is depicted as the beneficiary of the ritual. The latter is mounted on a stag and has been identified as a protective or tutelary deity (van den Hout 2018: 117).

[9] The frieze's circularity makes ambiguous the correct placing of this feature, either at the beginning or the end of the scene. Two arguments seem nevertheless to support the former option: firstly, the cup's handle, which originally covered the space between the mountain-god and the masonry structure, created a physical separation between them; secondly, none of the small motifs found elsewhere on the frieze were inserted between these two figures that

holding his bull's reins, an offering table, a row of seven worshippers headed by a king Tudḫaliya dressed in the manner of the sun-god of Heaven,[10] and lastly a second deity emerging from a rocky grove. Between the figures are rosettes (or flowers?) and stylized plants: they suggest that the celebration took place outside, perhaps at springtime (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 53).[11]

Apart from the storm-god, the interpretation of three figures has proved contentious. The last attendant, located behind the three musicians, has been described either as a "man of the staff" (LÚ ^{GIŠ}GIDRU) or a "man of the storm-god" (LÚ ^{d}10).[12] The divine figure following him has sometimes been interpreted as a vegetation deity (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 52–53; de Lapérouse 2008: 183; Michel 2018: 277), but it is more likely a mountain-god whose vegetal features have been emphasized.[13] The masonry structure has been identified either as an altar or a building;[14] both interpretations, however, are not necessarily contradictory, for an altar could be represented here in the shape of a building.[15]

The storm-god on the frieze

Another question concerns the identity of the deity located at the left end of the frieze (Figure 3). Being the recipient of the ritual activities, the god is placed in front of the worshippers and is separated from them by means of an animal and an offering table. He is represented in profile, except for his torso which is seen from the front. His left leg extends straight forward while his right leg is slightly stretched to the back. In his right hand, raised behind his head, he grasps a short stick ending in a round head.[16] This stance, typically associated with storm-gods in the Western part of the Near East, has gained the modern denominations of "smiting" (Collon 1972) or "menacing" pose (Cornelius 1994: 255–256).

The martial aspect of the storm-god is strengthened by the rest of his attire, which includes a short-sleeved tunic terminating in hatched fringes, a short kilt divided in the middle, and a sword, the hilt of which is suggested by a small loop behind the deity's left hip. The god has a squarish beard and wears a conical headgear adorned with a headband similar to that worn by some of the ritual participants (Herbordt 2005: 59–60). His hair falls in a long and curved pigtail behind his back where it touches the top of a floral decoration. In his extended left hand, he holds two hatched reins tied to an animal, a bull, as evident from the typical tuft of the lower part of the beast's tail.

Due to its poor state of preservation, the bull has hitherto been the subject of only few comments.[17] Its hindquarters alone are clearly visible, with the muscles of the upper thighs being figured by means of a schematized floral-like motif sometimes represented on animals from the Middle Hittite period onward.[18] The bull's forepart is lost

would have created a continuity between them.

[10] The hieroglyphic legend located by the king can be read from left to right: *207 + *88 = MONS+*tu*, that is, an abbreviation for the royal name Tudḫaliya, and *18 = MAGNUS.REX, great king. See Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 50 and note 20.

[11] Because of their shape, but also because they sometimes replace the sun-disc on Hittite aedicula seals (e.g. Herbordt *et al.* 2011: Kat. 70, Taf. 27; Kat. 71, Taf. 28; Kat. 76, Taf. 29; Kat. 82, Taf. 32), the rosettes are commonly interpreted as solar symbols. They also occasionally appear with the signs for "life" and "health" in the glyptic of the Old Kingdom (e.g. Boehmer and Güterbock 1987: 57, Abb. 43; Taf. 31, no. 250 A), perhaps pointing at their broader "positive" aspect (see also Schachner 2019: 346 with references). The stylized plants occasionally appear on reliefs depicting wild animals such as the Alacahöyük orthostats (Bittel 1976: 196–197, figs. 224–225) and the so-called "Taprammi bowl" from Kınık (Kastamonu Museum, Inv. 945; Yıldırım *et al.* 2021: fig. 2, a–b).

[12] The first option was cautiously proposed by Güterbock and Kendall (1995: 52, repeated by Savaş 2008: 667–668), who remarked that the role of the "man of the staff" was to lead the other worshippers, making his position at the end of the row here somewhat peculiar. Schuol's interpretation of this official as a "man of the storm-god" (2004: 335–336) cannot be verified either.

[13] Vegetation deities in Hittite art are in most cases feminine (see examples in Herbordt 2016a: 536), whereas the god on the frieze of the Boston fist is bearded. The curious design of the god's garment might in fact be proof of the smith's meticulousness, who bothered to represent the mountain's flora not only on the sides of the figure (with the four long leaves), but also on its front. Similarly, the intriguing tresses would simply have symbolized plants at the top of the hill. It has been suggested to me by the anonymous reviewer that this figure be similar to the DEUS-*na-mi-i-sa*/*masanami*-, the "god-inspired (man)" who delivers a message from the storm-god to king Hamiyata on TELL AHMAR 6 §22 (see Hawinks *apud* Bunnens 2006: 14–15). As pointed out by the same reviewer, however, the hieroglyphs used for *masanami*- on TELL AHMAR 5 §11, CORNU+CAPUT-*mi-i-sa* (Hawkins 2000: 232–233, pls. 95–96) show a beardless head with horns, two characteristics at odds with the figure on the Boston fist.

[14] Güterbock argued in favour of the altar while Kendall interpreted the figure as symbolizing a city, perhaps the Hittite capital itself (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 54). Savaş identified the structure with the ^{É}*tarnu*-, a ritual building complex supposedly located outside one of the gates of Ḫattuša (2008: 670–672).

[15] Similar proposals were already made by Schuol ("Räucheraltar" or "*kippa*-Kulthäuser" in the form of buildings) but eventually ruled out (2004: 337). Fragmentary vessels from Boğazköy decorated with a tower (to be reconstructed as tower-shaped vessels?), however, possibly suggest that cultic implements could have been given architectural forms (see Bittel 1976: 111, fig. 102; Schachner 2018: 10–11, Abb. 12). Furthermore, the stele BOĞAZKÖY 1 likely depicts an altar in the shape of a building (Bittel 1976: 201, fig. 229) – albeit very different from the structure represented on the frieze. To my knowledge, the closest parallel to the brick-like pattern characterizing this figure is the city-wall depicted on side A of the İspekçür stele (see Hawkins 2000: 301, pl. 143; Savaş 2008: 670 and note 57).

[16] On Güterbock and Kendall's drawing (here Figure 2), three rays are projecting from the mace's head which have been reproduced since then in every sketch of the Boston fist (e.g. Schuol 2004: 338, Abb. 1; de Lapérouse 2008: 182, fig. 58; Savaş 2008: 676, fig. 1.a, b; Cammarosano 2018: 66, fig. 1.d; Durusu-Tanrıöver 2019: 296, fig. 3; Simon 2019: 157, fig. 4). As the above authors already remarked, these are but scratches due to the metal's deterioration (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 48); to avoid any misinterpretation, they have been removed from the present reproduction.

[17] Güterbock and Kendall (1995: 48–49) provided a concise description of the animal, notably wondering what its original posture would have been (either "rampant" or "statant", finally deciding in favor of the latter). Schuol (2004: 324) and Savaş (2008: 664) merely mentioned its presence on the relief.

[18] Such is the case, for instance, with stags represented on the Alacahöyük reliefs (Bittel 1976: 196–197, figs. 224–225), on bulls depicted on seal impressions of Muwatalli II (Herbordt *et al.* 2011: 124–125, Kat. 37, Taf. 7) or Muwatalli II and Tanuḫepa (Herbordt *et al.* 2011: 136–137, Kat. 47–48, Taf. 16), or on the famous ivory plaque from

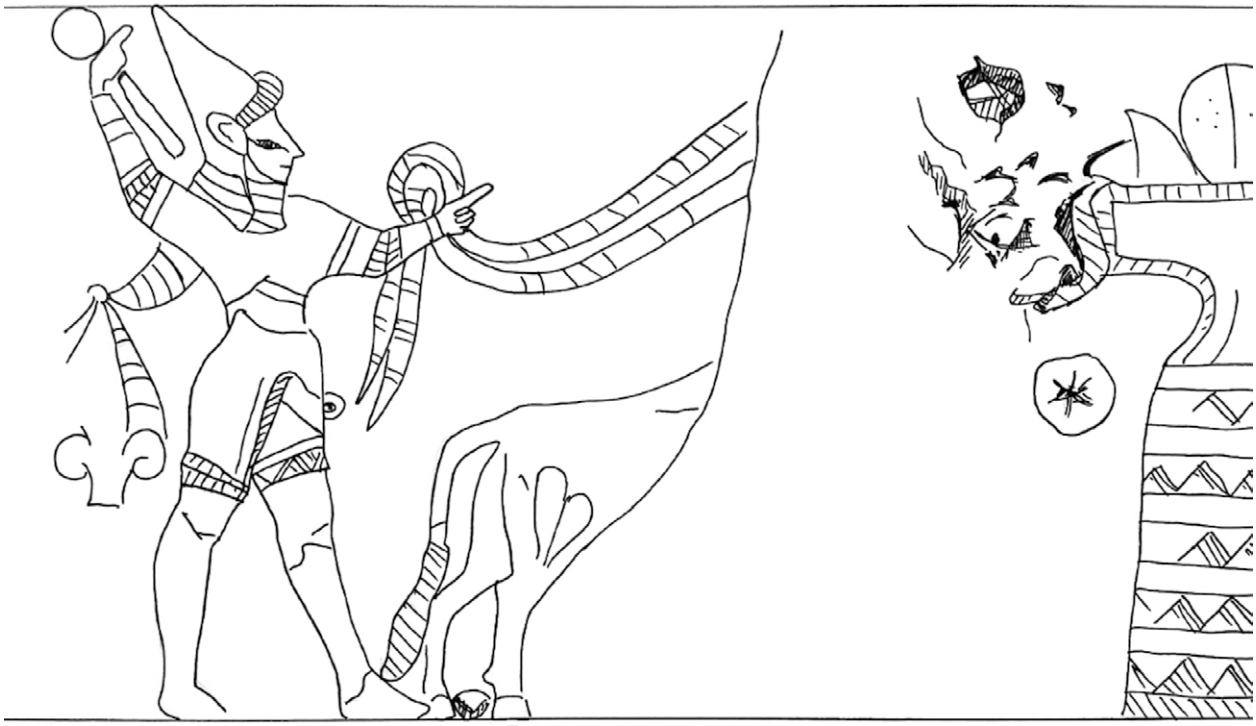

Figure 3. Detail of the relief scene: the storm-god and the bull. Drawing by A. Ganor.

in a gap, but a keen eye may observe the outer edges of its head, placed in front of the offering table, as well as its eye and muzzle. Even if only one head can be discerned, it is not impossible that two bulls were originally represented.[19]

In the absence of a hieroglyphic legend, the identity of the storm-god needs to be inferred from the context in which he is represented and from his distinctive iconographic features. The religious ceremony depicted on the frieze can hardly be associated with any known festival, but the combination of a mountain-god facing a storm-god in a reverential attitude evokes a cylinder seal from Emar (Beyer 2001: 75–76, A 46). The storm-god's attire is also suggestive of Syrian background, as the long pigtail with a curling end, the short kilt and the pointed tiara are regularly associated with storm-gods in Syrian imagery of the second millennium BCE (Dietz and Otto 2016: 92).

The smiting pose, common in Syrian representations of the storm-god,[20] is conversely rather unusual in Anatolian depictions of this deity for the 14th–13th centuries BCE:[21] it is found once on an Anatolian rock relief, at İmamkulu, but this figure represents an avatar of the Syrian storm-god, namely the storm-god of Aleppo (Hawkins 2003: 170–174). A few additional connections can be drawn between this deity and the figure on our frieze. The Boston fist shows the storm-god holding his bull's reins, a combination rarely attested in the art of the Hittite Empire, except for the storm-god of Aleppo.[22]

Megiddo, today at the Oriental Institute (Reg. no. A22292).

[19] This was also suggested by Kozal (2023: 246). The presence of a third hoof can perhaps be detected between the bull's legs (reproduced on Figure 3). It is noteworthy, also, that on the royal seal of Urḫi-Teššub – definitely our best parallel here – two bulls are represented (see Figure 4).

[20] The oldest attestations of the smiting (storm-)god (Addu) in Syrian documentation date back to the 18th century BCE (Collon 1981: fig. 1, nos. 5, 7, 16 and fig. 2, no. 21; Otto 2000: 216–217, nos. 87, 89, Taf. 8). For the Late Bronze age the figure is well attested in the documentation from Emar (Beyer 2001: 292–297) and Ugarit (Schaeffer 1956: 40–41, figs. 63–65; 42–44, figs. 67–69; Muller 2007: 505–512), where he represents either Teššub or Baʿal. The storm-god remained closely associated with the smiting stance in the Iron age, as can be seen from numerous Neo-Hittite steles and orthostats (Bunnens 2006: 35–36 and catalogue, notably nos. 1–16).

[21] Storm-gods in the imagery of the New Kingdom are mostly shown carrying the mace against their shoulder. This can be seen, for example, on an orthostat from Alacahöyük portraying the deity seated (Bittel 1976: 195, fig. 221), on the reliefs of Yazılıkaya (nos. 41–42), on a small mold recently discovered at Ortaköy (Süel 2020) or on several *Umarmungssiegel* of Muwatalli II (Herbordt *et al.* 2011: 132, Kat. 41, Taf. 13–14; 133–134, Kat. 43–44, Taf. 15; on all three bullae it is the king who apparently holds the shaft). In the New Kingdom the smiting pose is sometimes adopted by mountain-gods, notably those figures that were used in the hieroglyphic writing of the name Tudḫaliya (*4, MONS$_2$). See for instance the cartouche of Tudḫaliya IV at Yazılıkaya (Chamber B, relief no. 83) and several seal impressions attributed to the same king (Herbordt *et al.* 2011: 184–185, Kat. 89–91, Taf. 34–35).

[22] I am aware of only one example where a deity holding the hieroglyph TONITRUS (*199) also keeps an animal on a lead, namely on a signet ring impression from the Nişantepe (Herbordt 2005: 63–64, Kat. 566, Taf. 45). Due to the minuscule size of the impression, however, the beast cannot be securely identified. Also problematic is a cylinder seal from the Louvre Museum, AO 20138: there a storm-god (identified as "Adad-Ḫumunna-Tešub" by Parrot 1951: 187) is clearly

Furthermore, the bull's reins and the manner in which the storm-god is holding them have a good parallel on a seal of Urḫi-Teššub (i.e. Muršili III) where the "Halabean" storm-god occupies a central position (Hawkins 2003: 174; Figure 4).

Figure 4. Drawing of the seal of Urḫi-Teššub. After Herbordt, Bawanypeck and Hawkins 2011: Abb. 18, Kat. 57.1. Courtesy of S. Herbordt. Copyright Archive of the Boğazköy Expedition, DAI Berlin.

Put together, these affinities are clues for an identification of the figure on the frieze with the storm-god of Aleppo, a deity otherwise renowned for his distinctive iconography (Herbordt 2016b: 102; Dietz 2019: 193–195; 2020: 156 and note 19). In Anatolian depictions – which beside the aforementioned relief and seal include two fragmentary vases dating to the 15th century BCE (Boehmer 1983: 41, no. 47, Taf. 15–16; Seeher 2007) – he is always represented as a man ascending an eagle-like chariot driven by one or two bull(s). He holds the reins in his left hand and, in his right, brandishes the "victorious" weapon, i.e. the mace. A four-signs epigraph usually hovers before him which reads DEUS.TONITRUS GENUFLECTERE-*MI*, translated by Hawkins "Halabean storm-god" (2003: 172–174).

The lack of both the chariot and the epigraph on the frieze makes the identification of the figure with the storm-god of Aleppo problematic, though not absolutely impossible. Indeed, in Syrian imagery of the Middle and Late Bronze Age this deity is almost never depicted jumping into a chariot (Dietz and Otto 2016: 94). As can be inferred from an Old Babylonian letter, in the times of Yarīm-Līm Addu's cult statue in the temple of Aleppo took the shape of a sitting man.[23] Centuries later, after the Hittite conquest of the city, a new relief was carved on the eastern side of the cella that portrays a bearded deity standing with both hands raised (Figure 5).[24] The god holds no weapons, ascends no chariot, and is not accompanied by a bull either; were it not for the epigraph placed before him and the Aleppine location, nothing would suggest to the modern viewer that the storm-god of Aleppo is here represented.[25]

The fact that after the Hittite reorganization of the storm-god's temple (Kohlmayer 2011: 258; Dietz 2019: 197–198) a new representation of Teššub of Aleppo was modelled that does not fit the Hittite standard imagery of this deity is important, because it points to some flexibility in the god's iconography. Equally important is the presence of a secondary relief on the northern wall of the temple's cella which, although depicting a storm-god ascending a chariot driven by a bull, presents an unusual hieroglyphic legend (ALEPPO 4; Figure 6). The epigraph floating before the deity comprises only two signs, the familiar DEUS (*360), "god", and a *hapax*, which Hawkins proposed to read MATTEA, "mace" (2011: 38–40).

depicted driving a wheeled wagon drawn by bulls, but neither the dating nor the provenance of the piece can be ensured (Dietz 2019: 194–195 and note 26). Representations of Teššub holding a bull by the reins are conversely numerous in Syrian documentation for the same period; see, among others, the seal impressions of Ini-Teššub and his brother Ḫešmi-Teššub (Beyer 2001: 48–50, A3, A4a–b; also Herbordt 2005: 63 and notes 479–480).

[23] In this fragmentary text (M.7161, edited in Durand 2002: 43–46, no. 17), Warad-ili-šu reports a request made by the king of Mari, Zimrī-Līm, that a statue of him be placed in the temple cella, on the god's lap. Yarīm-Līm apparently did not meet his demand, explaining that the place was already occupied by a statue of the sun-god. For further developments concerning the cult of Addu of Aleppo at the time of the kingdom of Yamḫad, see Schwemer 2001: 211–237; Durand 2002: 1–15.

[24] The relief (ALEPPO 5) was discovered *in situ* during the 2003 excavation campaign. For an edition of the epigraph, see Hawkins 2011: 40. The reorientation of the temple's cella in direction of the eastern wall – that is, towards the relief – led Kohlmeyer to suggest that it may have been "the locus of the divine presence" (2011: 260; also Dietz 2019: 198). It is noteworthy, however, that the god is neither depicted enthroned nor astride his associated animal as is often the case for deities receiving ritual offerings (e.g. on the frieze of the stag protome from the Schimmel collection; see Muscarella 1974: 123). That a correlation might have existed between the posture of the divinity represented and the function of the representation as focus of religious veneration has been put forward by Ornan with respect to Baʿal (2011: 277–278).

[25] Schmitz interpreted the lack of weapon as a sign of pacific relationship between the storm-god and the king, also represented weaponless on the orthostat in front of him (2009: 137–138 and note 43). Herbordt suggested that the weapon of the storm-god was originally painted (2016b: 103). As she pointed out to me in a personal communication (February 24, 2022), this depiction of the storm-god has good parallels on steles from the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE (e.g. BABYLON 1 and KÖRKÜN in Hawkins 2000: 171–174, pl. 58; 391–394, pl. 209), where the weapon of the deity (in these cases a battle axe) is represented.

Figure 5. Aleppo temple: the storm-god and king Taita. After Hawkins 2011: fig. 3. Courtesy of K. Kohlmeyer.

Figure 6. Aleppo temple: the "god of the mace." After Hawkins 2011: fig. 2. Courtesy of K. Kohlmeyer.

This "god of the mace" is reminiscent of several inscriptions from the first millennium BCE which refer to Baʿal as an axe- or mace-bearing god.[26] The epiclesis is likely a reference to Baʿal's role in his combat against the Sea – a narrative also known at Aleppo, but in which the main role was played the local storm-god.[27] Given the correspondence between the two deities, it is likely that the "god of the mace" found within an Aleppine context was another manifestation of the storm-god (Bunnens 2006: 79–80). An additional argument in favour of this identification can be inferred from the comparison between the relief and the aforementioned stamp-seal of Urḫi-Teššub (Figure 4): while both images depict exactly the same combination, the storm- and the stag-god, the epigraph on the seal reads "Halabean storm-god" in place of DEUS.MATTEA.

All of this suggests that the iconography of the Aleppine storm-god was not as consistent as generally assumed. In Hittite Syria, the deity was not necessarily represented ascending an eagle-like chariot driven by a bull, nor was he always depicted alongside the four hieroglyphs standing for the "Halabean storm-god."[28] In fact, he is often seen standing in the smiting pose and holding the reins of his bull, two features that also characterize the deity portrayed on the Boston fist. It is possible to assume, therefore, that the maker(s) of the fist, drawing from Syrian imagery, represented Teššub of Aleppo.[29] We will now try to determine whether a special connection existed between this deity and the vessel dedicated to him.

The "fist" of the storm-god

Hittite texts show that the use of fist-shaped vessels was not restricted to the cult of the storm-god. An oracular inquiry, for instance, indicates that two iron GÉŠPU belonged amongst the paraphernalia of the grain-deity Ḫalki (KUB 5.7 rev. 24; Tognon 2004: 65). In the Festival of the Month (CTH 591), the king and queen are invited to "drink" the god Karmaḫili from a cup in the form of a fist (KUB 10.89 obv. ii 1'-3'; Klinger 1996: 508–509).[30] Like other *BIBRÎ*, the fist-shaped vessel not only served as cult object but could also embody a particular deity (Güterbock 1983: 212–214). Such was the case in the town of Tarammeka where, according to a cult inventory, the cult statue of the war god ZABABA was "a fist(-shaped vessel) of silver weighing 20 shekels" (KUB 38.1+ obv. i 4'-5'; Cammarosano 2018: 308–309).

That all these objects represented the same image can be inferred from comparing the Boston fist and a terracotta vessel recently excavated at Boğazköy (Schachner 2018: 9–10; 2019; Figure 7). Notwithstanding significant differences in terms of sophistication,[31] both artifacts look globally similar: they represent a man's right hand clenched into a fist. The fingers are bent at right angles, with their tips touching the base of the palm. They leave a small space at both extremities of the hand that has been decorated with rosettes. On the Boston fist the rosettes are slightly protruding, giving the impression that the hand is holding a cylindrical object with decorated ends.[32] The thumb is held straight up over the index finger. The phalanxes are salient, as are the muscles of the palm which, on both artifacts, form two little bulges. The nails, outlined by crescentic cuticles on the silver vessel, are also visible on its terracotta counterpart.

Two details nevertheless appear on the Boston fist that clearly distinguish this artifact from the terracotta model. As Güterbock and Kendall observed, V-shaped ridges can be seen on the back of the hand that form a series of triangles over the four knuckles (1995: 47; Figure 1); a somewhat similar pattern is also found at

[26] "BʿL ṢMD" in the Kulamuwa inscription (*KAI* 24 15; see Bunnens 2004: 63–64; 2006: 79), "BʿL KRNTRYŠ" in the Phoenician version of the Karatepe inscription (*KAI* 26 A II 19; III 2-3, 4; C III 17, 19; IV 20; see Schmitz 2009). Regarding the translation of ṢMD as "axe", see Dietrich and Loretz 2009: 173–177.

[27] See Popko 1998a: 120 and note 8; 1998b: 76; Ayali-Darshan 2020: 204–211.

[28] These observations also apply to later representations of the storm-god of Aleppo, e.g. on Malatya relief K – where the storm-god, represented twice (in the smiting pose and ascending a chariot) is simply described as "DEUS.TONITRUS" – and on the badly preserved orthostat found by the Water Gate at Karkemish which bears no epigraph at all (see Bunnens 2006: 166, figs. 101–102, cat. 44–45).

[29] As far as I know, the Anatolian provenance of the Boston fist has not been questioned since the publication of the piece by Güterbock and Kendall (1995: 45–46). Several elements strongly support the attribution of the vessel to a Hittite workshop, notably the stylized representation of the bull's hind leg muscles with a leaf-shaped pattern (see *supra* note 18 for examples), the representation of a king Tudḫaliya in the guise of the sun-god and the typical garment of the worshippers, which has but one equivalent found on the Alacahöyük reliefs (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 56).

[30] The meaning of the expression DINGIR *eku*-, "to drink a god" has been long controversial and remains debated today (for a summary of the scholarly discussion, see Heffron 2014: 165–172). The ceremony was carried out by means of a wide variety of vessels, often with a *BIBRÛ* (Heffron 2014: 172–185).

[31] The Boston fist is naturalistic in style while its terracotta counterpart is more schematic. The terracotta vessel is also presumably smaller, its volume being estimated by Schachner ca. 0.25 l. (2019: 346).

[32] This shape has been diversely interpreted. In line with her understanding of the vessel as representing a falconer's glove, Canby described it as a peg intended to prevent the hand from being crushed by the eagle's grip (2002: 169 and note 57). Güterbock and Kendall, who compared this shape with the barlike object customarily found in the hands of Egyptian male statues, described it as "a decorative device employed by the smith in order to avoid having to recreate in silver the deep concavities that form at the axes of the curling fingers when the hand is clenched into a fist" (1995: 47). The presence of round protrusions at the hand's extremities of Greek statues from the Archaic period (e.g. the famous *kouros* from Sounion exhibited at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, inv. no. 2720) supports their interpretation. Still, considering the refinement of the Boston fist I doubt that the smith opted here for a simplistic solution; he might have intentionally given the cavities at the hand's extremity the form of a rosette, an idea supported by the presence of a similar motif on the terracotta vessel.

Figure 7. Fist-shaped terracotta vessel from Boğazköy. After Schachner 2018: Abb. 8. Courtesy of A. Schachner, DAI Archives of the Boğazköy Expedition, Istanbul.

the base of the thumb where it takes the shape of an X. These features, which do not fit the naturalistic aspect of the vessel, led Canby to assume that the hand is covered with a fingerless falconer's glove (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 47 and note 9; Canby 2002: 169–170).[33] Admittedly the X-shaped bands crossing the thumb do recall thongs, and the V-shaped ridges possibly mark the extremities of a gauntlet. The back of the hand is otherwise slightly padded, which might also indicate the presence of an accessory.

Assuming that a glove is represented, one may still question Canby's attribution to a falconer's equipment. Indeed, this accessory, which leaves the thumb clearly exposed, does not seem particularly convenient for falconry.[34] Moreover, nothing on the frieze indicates that the ceremony represented is related to hunting activities.[35]

Hittite texts may hint at another interpretation. Primarily an anatomic designation ("fist"),[36] the logogram GÉŠPU has the larger signification of "violence, strength"[37] and appears occasionally in cultic ceremonies with the meaning of "boxing (contest)." Michele Cammarosano has recently gathered evidence for this activity in Hittite local festivals, where it often took place alongside other athletic competitions in order to rejoice with/over the gods (2018: 127–129, esp. table 7).

As far as I know there are no images of boxing from Hittite Anatolia, but it is possible that Hittite pugilists used some sort of covering for their hands. As a matter of fact, boxers are depicted wearing gloves on the famous "Boxer vase" from Hagia Triada (Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Λ342) and the so-called "Boxing boys" fresco from Akrotiri (Santorini Island; Nakamura 2019: 22–23). In both cases the glove covers the hand in its entirety, but there are examples, especially from Classical Greece, where boxers wear thongs under the knuckles, thus leaving the fingers free (Poliakoff 1987: 70–72, figs. 70, 72). In light of

[33] This hypothesis was repeated by several scholars, most recently Pilavcı 2017: 167–168, Görke and Kozal 2018, and Kozal 2023.

[34] Canby 2002: 170 states that the glove "provides protection against the claws of the raptor for the top of the hand, the wrist and the thumb," but the creases of skin at the joins indicate that the thumb is left unprotected. Besides, the glove itself looks rather thin in comparison with the equipment of modern or traditional falconers (see e.g. Canby 2002: 192, fig. 22).

[35] Although described as "a bird of prey with upswept wings" by Görke and Kozal (2018: 1674), the bird standing on the ground behind the king shows characteristics different from those of raptors ("hawks" according to Canby 2002: 173) held by the deities on the frieze of the Schimmel cup. Given its resemblance with the bird placed on the offering table on the Fraktın relief, it could have been a sacrificial animal, a bird-shaped vessel, or an effigy (Güterbock and Kendall 1995: 50; Savaş 2008: 665).

[36] Such meaning is attested, for example, in the Middle Hittite Ritual of Palliya, king of Kizzuwatna (CTH 475) where fists (GÉŠPU$^{ḪI.A}$) are given offerings alongside other parts of the storm-god's body (KBo 46.62 ii 8'). See Beckman 2013: 130, 138.

[37] Some of the occurrences of the term GÉŠPU with these meanings are available in Weeden 2011: 498.

Figure 8. Detail of the Hasanlu gold bowl: boxing fight. After Winter 1989: fig. 13. Hasanlu Project photograph, courtesy of R.L. Zettler, Associate Curator-in-Charge, Near East Section, Penn Museum Philadelphia.

this evidence, it is tempting to identify the fingerless gauntlet covering the Boston fist with a boxing glove, all the more so the Hasanlu gold bowl (National Museum of Iran, HAS 58-469) may provide a link between the storm-god and boxing: indeed, one of the fighters represented in the lower field of the frieze and who actually wears boxing gloves has been identified by Edith Porada as the Hurrian storm-god (Winter 1989: 93 with reference to Porada; Figure 8). It is also significant, considering the presence of the storm-god and the bull on the frieze of the Boston fist, that the boxers of the Hasanlu gold bowl are depicted under a storm-god standing in a chariot and holding a bull's reins (Winter 1989: 92–93, fig. 12). A stream of water flows down from the bull's mouth which spreads over the storm-god's opponent.

However, several arguments come to mind that weaken the identification of the glove as boxing equipment. Firstly, the Hittite documentation does not expressly mention the use of a (*BIBRÛ*) GÉŠPU prior to or after boxing.[38] Secondly, the rare pugilists attested in the Mesopotamian or Egyptian record for the second millennium BCE are portrayed barehanded, with a strip occasionally supporting their wrists (Poliakoff 1987: 68).[39] Last but not least, the frieze of the Boston fist shows no boxing scene.

Another interpretation, taking into account the frieze's iconography and which has the advantage of emphasizing one of the storm-god's characteristics, would be to identify the gauntlet with an implement intended to protect the god's hand from the friction generated by the reins of the bull(s). Such device is unattested in Hittite iconography so far, but it could have been part of the charioteer's equipment, just like the whip or the goad.[40] As suggested to me by Suzanne Herbordt, the thongs crossing the thumb and which seem to be fixed to the wrist could be a transposition of the reins depicted on the frieze.[41] Indeed, the reins are not only held by the god but also attached to the wrist, thus forming a loop over the hand also visible on the cylinder seal of Urḫi-Teššub (Figure 4).

Conclusion

The analysis of the main deity on the frieze together with the form of the vessel invites us to propose a new interpretation of the Boston fist. Because of his distinctive characteristics – the menacing stance and the bull – we offered to identify the storm-god with Teššub of Aleppo, a deity whose cult flourished in

[38] In a few local festivals a *BIBRÛ* was filled before competitions started, but the texts do not specify the form of the vessel used on these occasions. See for instance KUB 25.23 obv. i 20'-22', ii 3'-8'; KUB 59.34 rev. iii 2-5 (Hazenbos 2003: 30–40, no. 4; 43–44, no. 6).

[39] See the terracotta plaques at the British Museum (BM 91906) and the Louvre (AO 12447) originating from southern Mesopotamia and dating to the beginning of the second millennium BCE.

[40] Whips have been identified by Parrot on cylinder seal AO 20138; on the top register a whip or goad is even held by a storm-god jumping into a chariot driven by a bull. See Parrot 1951: 183, 185.

[41] Personal communication (February 24, 2022). Görke and Kozal also state that "the hand is holding the end of a leash" (2018: 1674) but refer to a falcon's leash.

Ḫattuša in the second part of the second millennium BCE (Schwemer 2001: 494–502). We have confirmed that the vessel does not represent a bare fist, but rather a hand covered with a fingerless gauntlet. Two interpretations of this garment have been proposed: it could either represent a boxing glove, or, more probably, an element of Teššub's combat outfit meant to protect his hand from friction with the bull's reins. Thus, the vessel would evoke the vigorous hand of the storm-god of Aleppo holding the reins of his bull(s), an image fully developed on the frieze in relief.

As this investigation focuses on the iconography of the Boston fist, an important point has been left aside which concerns the dating and origin of the vessel. Without completely ruling out its attribution to Tudḫaliya I, Güterbock and Kendall dated the piece to Tudḫaliya III, based on the hieroglyphic legend mentioning a "Great King Tudḫaliya" and several stylistic features (1995: 56–57). The identification of the storm-god on the frieze with Teššub of Aleppo supports this hypothesis. Indeed, Syrian features have been detected elsewhere in the recently reconstructed Ritual for Mount Ḫazzi (CTH 785), leading Corti, who edited the ritual, to highlight the direct influence of North-western Syrian cultic traditions on the cultural milieu of Šapinuwa, the royal residence of Tudḫaliya III (2017: 10–12). The veneration of two storm-gods during this festival is particularly noteworthy, as it is thought to reflect an Aleppine tradition celebrating the storm-god of Mount Ḫazzi and the storm-god of Aleppo (Corti 2017: 11; Gilan 2021: 33–34).

If Tudḫaliya III is the Hittite king who dedicated the vessel, then his royal residence could rightly stand as the production site of this artifact. It is worth noting, in this respect, that excavations conducted in Ortaköy -Šapinuwa in the last decade have unearthed metal workshops in the Tepelerarası area of the Lower City (Süel 2017). Hundreds of molds possibly used for *repoussé* metalwork (Süel and Weeden 2019: 663; Süel 2020), as well as a silver signet-ring (Süel and Weeden 2019) have been found in Building G and Area G which suggest that fine craftsmanship was practiced in these workshops. Hopefully the publication of the molds will provide new iconographic material and contribute to a better understanding of the figures carved on the frieze of the Boston fist.

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Chapter 37:
The tale of "Nergal and Ereškigal" revisited

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Abstract. The tale of Nergal and Ereškigal is, essentially, a succession myth clad in psychological discourse of rivalry, lust and sex, desire and deception, hate and love in the realm of death. The striking similarities and differences between the two sources of the text leave important questions unsolved, despite in-depth studies over the years. Are the two versions, the Middle Babylonian from El Amarna and the Neo-Assyrian versions, based on one and the same Old Babylonian tradition or on two different ones? How did a Neo-Assyrian scribe elaborate and four-fold expand the text? What was the purpose and function of each version? What is the contribution of the intertextual relations with the myths of Inana's descent and Ištar's descent? The following is a new attempt to clarify these questions and other unsettled issues.

Keywords: throne, chair, bathroom, gate, Namtar, messenger, heaven, clone, Erra, love, marriage, violence.

Introduction[1]

The tale of Nergal and Ereškigal (henceforth N&E) is one of three mythological narratives about descent to the netherworld with the intention to depose its queen Ereškigal. The other two are Inana's descent (ID) and Ištar's descent (IšD). All three myths recount escape plans, typically dominated by tricks and treachery of Ea. N&E is also one of several etiological narratives about changes in the rank or role of gods.[2] Nergal was associated with the netherworld in northern Babylonia in the third millennium. In the Old Babylonian period his cult merged with the cult of Ereškigal.[3] Nergal's descent is a literary means to recount the merger. Therefore, the question of why did Nergal travel to the netherworld misses the point.[4] The narrative translates the merger into the personal relations of the protagonists, from their first encounter until their marriage.[5] It elaborates on gender stereotypes, explicit sexual desire and high emotions as vehicles for depicting cultic issue.[6] Given that the account is rooted in contemporary social conventions, we get a glimpse into the bedroom of the ancient Mesopotamians.

The discourse evolves along two parallel thematic lines: the one is defined by the principles of the cosmic order and Babylonia's cultic scene. The cosmic principles are represented by the isolation of the netherworld, the etiology of Nergal's descent, the union with Ereškigal, the genesis of Erra, and the syncretism of Erra with Nergal. The setting is the cosmic divine realms of heaven and netherworld. Cultic practices are symbolized by the invitation for Ereškigal to receive her meal, purification, and the fixed period of seven days sojourn in the netherworld. The second thematic line is entrenched in earthly social customs. It consists of court etiquette, deployment of messengers, customary hospitality, and gender related behavior. The portrayal of Nergal and Ereškigal stands out for its psychological depth that endows the narrative with a sense of authenticity. The plot of the first millennium version follows closely the outlines of IšD, spinning a

[1] Editions: EA 357: Knudtzon 1915; Gurney 1957: 28 and 1960: 105–131; Hunger 1976: 17–19; Izre'el 1997: 51–61; Ponchia and M. Luukko 2013. NA version: Hutter 1985; Walls 2001: 127–182. Full list in Foster 2005: 524. Translations: Foster 2005: 509-524 (English); Müller 1994 (German); Pettinato 2000 (Italian).
Abbreviations according to the list of the Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie, see http://www.rla.badw.de/reallexikon/abkuerzungslisten.html. See also main text below.

[2] E.g. Ningišzida from dying god to chair-bearer of the netherworld; elevation of Ninurta (Anzu and Lugal-e); elevation of Marduk (*Enūma eliš*). Dalley 1989: 163–164 maintains that N&E harmonizes two separate "traditions" rather than transition of rule. However, both versions are emphatically explicit about Nergal's change of rank, i.e. becoming king of the netherworld. The merger of the two cults occurred in the OB period and brought a change in Nergal's rank from a northern to pan Babylonian ruler of the netherworld. The title "Enlil of the netherworld" in Urnamma A represents a short episode during Šulgi's reign.

[3] Ereškigal did not have temples or known shrines, but she had a cult. Ereškigal was revered in the mortuary ritual, for which there is little administrative record. I would not exclude the possibility that there were shrines in cemeteries. Allatum, her Semitic incarnation, is named in offering lists, which register meals other than funerary offerings. These textual sources were collected in Jordanova 2015. The netherworld vision of an Assyrian prince (*SAA* 3 32) mentions Allatum (l. 30) and Ereškigal (l. 35, 38, r. 32).

[4] Walls 2001:136. See zà-mí hymn dedicated to Nergal (GÌR.UNUG) OIP 99, p. 48: 65-69.

[5] Gadotti 2020: 1-16, argues that the netherworld was given to Ereškigal as dowry (GEN: 13). Her reading of Ereškigal's status does not change previous interpretations of the tale. Note that GEN, like other sources, does not reveal who was the husband. I read Gugalanna as epithet, see Katz 2003: 438.

[6] Emotional and sexual desire are otherwise the material of love lyrics, i.e. the Sumerian Inana-Dumuzi love songs (Sefati 1998). By gender I assume social-cultural construct, which we evaluate according to our modern perception, that I hope was shared by the Babylonians.

deep intertextual correspondence between the two mythological narratives.[7]

The emotional and sexual tone of the late version swayed scholars to analyze the narrative through gender and feminist theories. It led some to a judgmental attitude towards Ereškigal, depicting her as a cruel bitch, and Nergal as victim. The text, however, does not support such depictions, which may be rooted in a modern point of view.[8]

The text came down to us in two versions, a short 14th century text from El Amarna in Egypt (EA 357, 88 lines), a long 7th century source from Huzirina (Sultantepe, ca. 420 lines, STT 28), and Late Babylonian fragment from Uruk.[9] The ductus of the Amarna text is Babylonian. It exhibits typical features of the western periphery, Hittite, and Hurrian, implying an indirect course of transmission from Babylonia to Egypt.[10] Moreover, it entails that the text was reproduced in the western periphery by a local scribe (Izre'el 1991: 212).[11] The original Babylonian version had not been found yet.

The two versions of N&E share the cosmic setting, the framework of the plot and some details. The Neo-Assyrian Huzirina version (henceforth STT) differs from the Amarna version (henceforth EA) on three important counts: the length and degree of detailing, the number of descents, one in EA and two in STT, and the sexually informed tenor. Power struggle is at the basis of both versions. Whether the different versions hark back to a common early source is in debate that requires further investigation. Both exhibit textual correspondences with the Sumerian ID, and the Akkadian IšD. It substantiates the putative Old Babylonian origin of the tradition, but its exact date is unknown.

The source of the STT version and its path of transmission to Huzirina is unknown. Wide use of Neo-Assyrian stylistic conventions as repetitions, parallelisms and symmetry (Vogelzang 1992: 272–273) as well as elaboration of existing episodes advocate a Neo-Assyrian date for the expanded STT version.[12] Three enigmatic issues shroud the STT version: first, no copy was found in Assurbanipal's library. Second, no copy was found in Nergal's temple in Tarbiṣu, where copies of myths related to him, Anzu and "Erra and Išum" were found.[13] Third and most puzzling is that no copies of N&E and IšD were found in the same site, despite their deep intertextual relations, actually dependence of N&E on IšD. It suggests that the version from Huzirina was composed elsewhere.

The version of EA portrays Nergal as an aggressive, rude intruder, and Ereškigal as a ruler too weak to fight back. Trying to make the best out of her situation she offers to marry him. Nergal's behavior and Ereškigal's expected hostile reaction emulate the behavior of the intruders Inana, Ištar and the attacked Ereškigal. Nergal's violence befits his divine martial nature. The STT version is more forgiving to Nergal, although he is still hostile and provocative next to a frail Ereškigal, who seeks love and respect. The text may have been the work of Nergal's cultic personnel, who adapted an old version to the current first millennium cultic situation.[14] It elaborates on the sexual desire and romantic sentiments of the couple, presumably inspired by stereotyped gender behavior. It is tempting to psychologize and speculate over the lack of emotional aspect of the EA version. But Old Babylonian narratives are usually less elaborate than their first millennium versions, and more focused on delivering the pertinent information. The version of EA is a good example for that. The text keeps to the issue, Nergal's intention to depose Ereškigal, which ended up when she submitted and offered him herself and the throne.

The cultic background of the narrative is well known, but its literary expression is still raising questions. What motivated the portrayal of the relations between Nergal and Ereškigal, and the Neo-Assyrian elaboration of the text (as in STT)? Are the EA and the STT versions based on one and the same Old Babylonian tradition or on two different ones? The various interpretations bear witness to the complexity of the texts.[15] The intertextual relations with ID and IšD were widely recognized. However, that STT's first descent fully emulates the plot of IšD was overlooked. In the following I will reconsider

[7] These include citations, parallel episodes and responses. The earlier version of EA is closer to the Sumerian ID. Our earliest source of IšD is Tiglat-pileser I. Whether it is the original Akkadian myth is unknown.

[8] Particularly Walls 2001. A case in point is the interpretation of the offering of food to the messenger, which is merely the conventional hospitality, comparable to STT: 361–362 offered to Namtar. *Ad hoc* literary considerations often disobey the logic of modern-time theories.

[9] The remains of the Uruk text are very close to the Neo–Assyrian STT text so I will refer to the two as one.

[10] Izre'el 1993 and 1997: 51–61, pl. xxiii–xxx. Ponchia and Luukko 2013: xcii–xciii with extensive literature. In analogy, the Amarna version of Adapa (EA 356) is either Babylonian in origin or an exact copy of a Babylonian tablet.

[11] Hurrian & Hittite features e.g.: *plene* spelling; use of TA for /dá/ (*uddahhas,* ll. 15, 81) *zí* for ZI (*zittu*, l. 62); *ikrruru* (l. 12) CAD K, 208: -*karāru* - RS. First attested in MA! *ana* instead of *ina qātī* (ll. 42, 84) loc. adv. after *ana*; *kīnanna* – CAD K, 380 Boghazkoy, EA and Nuzi.

[12] I propose the same date for the Assur and Nineveh mss. of IšD. See Katz 2015: 71 and note 51.

[13] On columns III–VI of a six column tablet. Perhaps the broken off columns I–II of this tablet were inscribed with the myth of N&E. Al-Rawi and Black 1989: 112 note 5 suggest that there is room for a third composition. Machinist 2005: 33 proposed that the third was *Enūma eliš,* since all three are concerned with the "Fragility of the cosmos". Contrarily, I expect it to be N&E.

[14] The last scene of N&E corresponds to the description of affection and loyalty in the netherworld vision of an Assyrian prince (SAA 3, 32: rev. 18).

[15] In view of the detailed commentary of Ponchia and Lukko 2013 I find it unnecessary to repeat each interpretation which differs from mine.

the tale in a new attempt to clarify unsettled issues. It gives me a great pleasure to dedicate my thoughts to Tali, an old friend and great scholar, whose interest in Mesopotamian mythology is beyond its manifestations in the ancient Mesopotamian art.

On versions and traditions

About 700 years separate the two versions of N&E. Nevertheless, EA and STT still share the framework of the plot and its purpose. They differ in details, in length and in the number of descents. The irregular relations between the versions cast doubts on the sources of the texts, whether they derived from the same tradition or not. Gurney (1960: 107) assumed that the EA version is abbreviated form of a longer same tradition. The same did Harris (2000: 129), and Ponchia and Luukko (2013: xcvi) who described the EA version as "a sort of summary". Reiner (1985: 50) discerns a short school text (EA) and a library copy (STT) of the same myth. She ascribes the additional episodes to later elaborations.[16] Von Weiher (1971: 48) admits that the versions can hardly be separated but cautiously advocates two traditions (Vorlagen). Lambert (1973: 357) refers to two traditions rather than two sources. Hutter (1985: 58–59) maintains that these are two different literary expression of the same tradition, but the differences are too significant to assume a common textual source. Foster (2005: 506) speaks of different traditions.

The dynamic succinct style of the EA version is characteristic of Old Babylonian narratology, but the logical development of the discourse precludes the possibility of abbreviated form. Did the two descents originate in parallel Old Babylonian traditions, or in a later expansion of one and the same tradition?[17] The answer is hidden in the episodes which differ most. It will transpire through close comparative reading of the two versions, and their correspondence with ID and IšD.

The EA version shares with the STT version the beginning and the end of the plot almost verbatim. The first meaningful diversion from the frame is at the preparation for the first descent. Since two descents imply one escape, the escape plans are at the center of the preparations.

The first descent

Escape plans and arrival

Each version describes an escape plan. The purpose is to deceive Ereškigal and save Nergal from the claws of the netherworld. The architect of the escape plans is Ea, as always. As we know, Nergal is a permanent resident of the netherworld, so why would he escape? I argue that N&E took ID and IšD as a model of which the escape plan is an important part. Yet for Inana and Ištar the escape is consequential.

The EA version diverts from ID before the implementation of the plan. Nergal ignored the plan and proceeded to kill Ereškigal, seized the throne by force and stayed. Nevertheless the text recounts the plan in detail (EA: r. 3–8). The EA version justifies the plan by Nergal's fear of death (EA r. 1–2). Fear is inconsistent with Nergal's aggressive behavior and exposes a negative attitude toward him, if not mockery for the god who causes death.[18] The plan involves fourteen demons,[19] a pair for each of the seven gates of the netherworld. Keeping in mind that Nergal is a netherworld god, demons are his most suitable guardians. Ea's words *ittika ana alāki* 'to go with you' suggest that Ea created them for the mission, similar to the creation of the kur-gara, the gala-tur and Aṣušunamir, and that the demons accompanied Nergal all the way from heaven. Incantation against diseases from Ugarit attributes the creation of diseases to Ea, but their upbringing to Earth.[20] According to EA they are "Namtar's army": "He ordered the army of Namtar 'let the gates open' (r. 33–34)".[21] In the context of N&E, after Namtar visited in heaven, the designation "Namtar's army" entails that they were not created by Ea then and there. Rather, Nergal summoned the demons when he entered the gate, in their habitat. That Ea exploited Namtar's own helpers to save Nergal's own life is a cunning trick, a joke at the expense of Namter and Ereškigal.

STT presents a very different version of the escape plan. Ponchia and Luukko (2013: 39–40) compellingly argue that Ea created a double of Nergal, a clone, who will replace Nergal in the netherworld. I have to stress that as long as the double is active, he is an individual self. The creation of the double (STT: 102–104) seems to be the idea of Nergal himself (STT: 94?–99). Fear does not play a role in the events. The creation of the clone is analogous to the creation of Aṣušunamir in

[16] Reiner is not clear on whether they derive from the same tradition.
[17] Examples of contemporary parallel traditions are the three Old Babylonian mythological narratives about the descent of Ningišzida : one Akkadian : *UET* 6, 395, SEAL no. 1522, http://www.seal.uni-leipzig.de; two Sumerian: ETCSL 1.7.3 and Black 2004: 215–227.

[18] The wording is reminiscent of Nin-šubur weeping, asking Ea to save Inana in ID. EA: r. 1–2 "Nergal weeps before his father Ea". Even if it is a formula, compare also Gilgameš after Enkidu's descent to the netherworld (GEN: 167), the text mocks the warrior Nergal who is afraid of death.
[19] The identity of these demons was treated by Ponchia and Luukko (2013: 52).
[20] Zomer 2021: 166, s.v. 2.2.1.7; del Olmo Lete 2014: 50, l. 20. The combination of Ea and Earth seems natural as both are located underground. It is interesting that Ea here replaced Anu of the prevalent tradition (e.g. Geller, UHF: 247, 367). Still, the text conflates with the common belief that the demons reside in the netherworld. On pp. 165–170 Zomer lists references to malevolent powers that descended from heaven. The creation by Anu entails descent from heaven, nourished by Earth means residence in the netherworld.
[21] *namtara ṣaābīšu* - Anticipatory genitive / topicalization.

IšD, as well as the gala-tur and kur-gara in ID.[22] Ea's creation is by nature a special supernatural liminal being, not a disguise. The descent of the clone, however, necessitates the descent later of Nergal himself.[23] And again, would the double be Nergal, as some translations imply, a second descent will not be necessary. During the first sojourn the divine names Nergal and Erra are used only by the mythographer. Ereškigal and Namtar do not know his identity, they refer to the clone as "that god".[24] The creation of the double etiologizes Erra's advent in Babylonia and his syncretism with Nergal.[25]

At the gate

The succinct EA version shifts directly from the escape plan to the encounter with the gatekeeper.[26] The procedure at the gate (EA r. 10–18) was modelled on ID: 73–122, though it may have been standard procedure. Namtar was happy to see that Ereškigal's demand was honored. STT is more elaborate and burdened with inconsistencies. The formulaic description of the netherworld, taken over from IšD: 4–11,[27] describes the clone's descending and his demand to enter (STT: 147–157, 159–160). The procedure is more complex than in EA. Namtar, who reasonably thinks that the double is Nergal,[28] is angry instead of showing satisfaction that Ereškigal's demand was honored. His anger (STT: 171–172) is expressed in a couplet that describes Ereškigal's anger at the arrival of Ištar, IšD: 29–30. The interpolated couplet is a miss because Ištar was an intruder whereas Nergal was summoned.

Moreover, Ereškigal's reaction is odd. First, she refers to Nergal, the warrior who seeks *Ellilutu* in the netherworld, without mentioning his name (STT: 186–187). Enlil of the netherworld is the epithet which already Šulgi attributed to Nergal (Urnamma A: 90). Ereškigal warns Namtar not to strive for *Ellilutu*, thereby the words project Nergal's scheme to usurp the kingship of the netherworld. She then offers Namtar the kingship of the netherworld, proclaiming her wish to ascend to heaven.[29] Foster (2005: 507) explains that Ereškigal wants to take her food herself. Ponchia and Luukko (2013: 49) read it as an opportunity to leave the netherworld for a substitute. They compare it with Ereškigal's complaint over her living conditions in IšD: 32–35. I suggest that Ereškigal's speech in STT: 186–192 combines insights gained from IšD: 27, ID: 165–166 (about the threat to Ereškigal's queenship) and IšD: 32–34. It was inspired by the will to keep to the sequence of the Inana - Ištar model. That the topic was abandoned and Ereškigal returned to function as usual, tags this speech as a literary design. Offering the throne to Namtar is a reflex to Nergal's anticipated threat. Significantly, instead of resistance Ereškigal gives up her throne voluntarily, as it finally happened. The wish to ascend to heaven is a reflex to the complaint over the conditions in IšD: 32–34. Thus, it ties up with Anu's invitation to receive her ration of the banquet. Eventually, Ereškigal orders to bring in "that god" (DINGIR.MEŠ *šâsu*). The storyteller says: DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}Erra (STT: 193–194).[30] To the end, neither Namtar nor Ereškigal call the disrespectful god by name.

A throne for the journey

As the tale unfolds, Nergal has to take a throne to the netherworld. In response to Ereškigal's initial demand Ea gives Nergal a throne to take to the netherworld (EA: 42), which triggered the escape plan. In the STT version the throne was part of the first escape plan. A fake throne was fabricated according Ea's instructions, framed within restatement of Nergal's premeditated intention to take over the netherworld: "You will go the road you desired" (STT: 106/123). The literary framework isolates the construction of the throne as a discrete literary unit, extraneous to the sequence of the events. Intertextual relations with ID and IšD call to mind the fate of Inana and Ištar after touching Ereškigal's throne. The purpose of a faked throne (STT: 111–121) was the subject of intensive speculations (Ponchia and Luukko: 2013: 43–45), but it is still puzzling. This symbol of kingship befits queen Ereškigal as well as Nergal's royal prospects. Dalley's view (1989: 163) that it is "the ghost's chair" has to be rejected. The ghost's chair is an accessory to the funerary rite and the cult of the dead. It was the seat of the ghost (or his

[22] The dependence of the first descent on IšD is manifested later by the quote of the description of the netherworld IšD: 4–11, 12–15 and STT: 149–159.

[23] Reiner (1985: 56) already observed that. However, a double, or clone, is not a disguise, it is a separate entity, so it is not comparable to "Enlil and Ninlil", where Enlil himself impregnated Ninlil, nor to Enki in Enki and Ninhursaĝa.

[24] "The Gods Erra" (l. 194. DINGIR.MEŠ ^{d}*Erra*) points, perhaps, to all the different roles that he played. DINGIR.MEŠ in l. 193 must be a slip of the scribe since at that point neither Ereškigal nor Namtar knew of a double. Chiodi (Pettinato 2003: 50–53) convincingly argues that the Neo-Assyrian scribe intentionally made a distinction between Erra and Nergal. Names are identity and, therefore, we should respect the scribe's choice of names as a principle. Reiner (1985: 58–59) reached the same conclusion for different reasons.

[25] Erra was associated with Nergal already in the Old Akkadian period. However, he is not documented in texts pertaining to the Old Babylonian panthea of south and central Babylonia (Richter 1999). The syncretism with Nergal may have occurred later than we thought, perhaps during the Kassite period. It is not impossible that traditions about their separate cults did not survive.

[26] Nergal's comment (EA r. 21) sounds like a paraphrase on IšD: 41. "Enter my lady, the land of no return will rejoice in you." EA r. 21 *lihdânni* vs. IšD: 41 *lihdû*, raises the question of whether the 12th century LKA 62 is really the earliest version of IšD.

[27] Already attested in the 12th century source LKA 62. STT: 159–160 is reminiscent of IšD: 12–15.

[28] Foster (2005: 507 ad. 10) changes "Nergal" into Erra. I see no need to correct the Assyrian scribe.

[29] Why warn him against *Ellilutu* and then offer him the throne? This question was overlooked previously.

[30] In case that it is singular (Hunger 1976: 19, ad III: 11' refers to CAD I, 91a) the passage dates the elaboration of the text to the middle of the 1st millennium. The plural may hide the double identities. See also fn. 24.

icon) during the performance. The place of this chair is at the site of the ritual.[31] Besides, neither Ereškigal nor Nergal were ghosts.

The purpose of the throne is stated as the clone meets Ereškigal. STT: 205–208 is a message that Erra, disguised as a messenger delivers, allegedly from Anu to Ereškigal "sit on this throne and render judgment...". The message is odd, since Ereškigal, the queen of the netherworld, already sits on a throne and renders judgment. Nevertheless, the message passes without response. The meaning is in debate (Ponchia and Luukko 2013: 43 and 53 and Walls 2001: 136). Messengers carrying gifts were customary indeed. But the gift itself, a fake throne, is in my view just a literary figure, inserted to create parallel to the real throne that Nergal himself carries in the second descent.[32] As opposed to the fake throne, Nergal's throne is designated "Throne, the firm place" (STT: 376 *ašra kīna kussû*), signifying that Nergal will establish his kingship over the netherworld. It confirms that the purpose of the gift of the fake throne is a literary construct rather than thematic.[33] The fake throne is the counterpart of the real throne, forming a symmetry between the two descents. This typical structural element of first millennium Akkadian narratives, is a hallmark of later redaction. That the fake throne will be carried to the netherworld by the fake Nergal and the genuine one by the real Nergal expands the symmetry. Therefore, Nergal's throne in the second descent represents an original version of the narrative, as is EA: 42.[34]

The structural merits of the literary unit STT: 106–123, the faked throne, the pointless gift to Ereškigal, and the forced symmetry put the originality of the first descent in doubt. More elements of the first descent point to a later addition, among them the etiology of Erra's biography.

In the court of Ereškigal

The clone, Erra, arrived in the netherworld disguised as a messenger of Anu (STT: 194, 289, 291). Messengers are the only category of living that could move freely between the opposite realms. This practical lie anticipates his escape later.

According to social customs, Ereškigal shows hospitality to her guest. The messenger is offered a seat, food and drink.[35] Then Ereškigal offered her body (bathroom scenes), a repetition of Ea's instructions.[36] The bathroom scenes are crucial for changing the relations of Nergal and Ereškigal from hostility to love.

The bathroom scenes (STT 215–218 and 239–242) received much attention in the literature (Ponchia & Luukko 2013: 53). The most extensive discussion is by Hutter (1985: 85–95), who analyzed the bathroom motif from Sumer to Jerusalem. The objective of the scenes transpires when it is juxtaposed with the purpose of the discourse. My first question is whether copulation with a messenger will lead to the marriage with Nergal.[37] The messenger is a clone, not Nergal himself, so the answer is no and, therefore, in the first bathroom scene Ereškigal had to be rejected. Assuming that the scene serves a purpose, the subsequent question is, why a failed seduction attempt was added to the discourse?

Adhering to the convention to fulfill instructions, the first bathroom scene is the literal execution of Ea's instructions, like his instructions in IšD. But in order to propel the plot Ea's instructions must be ignored, otherwise love will not sprout and the clone's visit will be a dead end. Thus, there is a second attempt to seduce the clone, as a means to change the tone of the tradition from violent usurpation into a love story. The second bathroom scene is a repetition that ended in sexual intercourse, a prelude to consummation of marriage. Eventually it will form the legal basis of Ereškigal's demand that Nergal will be sent back to her.

The two bathroom scenes are separated by a gap of ca. 20 lines. This gap conceals the game changer, the account of the events that swayed the clone to change his mind and land in bed with Ereškigal. Hutter's discussion of the bathroom motif clarifies that it is a step towards marriage. Considering the improbability that Nergal descended after his clone, and that neither Ereškigal nor Namtar knew the identity of "that god", I propose that the gap hides negotiations over the future marriage and sharing the rule of the netherworld.[38]

[31] The ritual referenced by Dalley is a funerary ritual performed in order to dispatch the ghost that seized the man to the netherworld forever. References to a chair see Katz 2014 with previous literature.

[32] Reiner (1985: 54) and Gurney (1960: 131 ad. VI 8) proposed that Nergal took the throne with six other items to hand to the gatekeepers, i.e. a reflex to the descent of Inana and Ištar. This possibility cannot be proven nor falsified. The remain of the passage suggests that Nergal killed the gatekeepers, an inverted parallel of Ištar's descent, who descended for the opposite purpose.

[33] The gift of the throne undermines her authority, while a faked cheaply decorated item (first descent) adds insult to injury.

[34] I understand EA "take to Ereškigal" as a metonym signifying netherworld.

[35] Compare STT: 361–362 in honor of Namtar and, hospitality in the myth of Adapa.

[36] I strongly object to Walls' 2001: 142 claim that it is "fraudulent hospitality" and Ereškigal a "deceitful woman". It adds to more assertions and conclusions that the text does not support. Methodologically one cannot read the texts divorced from ID, IšD, and although in these texts Ereškigal offers other benefits to the guests, they amount to the same sincere intentions. In N&E as in ID and IšD she is the victim of tricks, lies and aggression. The argument that she will kill him with food of the dead is untenable also because in "reality" there are no love, passion and sex in the netherworld either.

[37] It is not comparable, e.g., to Enki in the Sumerian "Enki and Ninhursaga".

[38] This, I assume, is the reason why the clone is consistently called Nergal. I note that the names called by the storyteller indicate a functional use.

The reference to Anu or An[unaki] at the end (STT: 237) indeed points to a result of cosmic significance. Therefore, in the very last episode of STT there is no discussion about the rank of Nergal and their future relations. It supports my view that it was agreed upon earlier.

The double flees back to heaven

Having sexual intercourse with Ereškigal is a turning point in the plot. Extrapolating from codex Hammurabi §130 a man who made love to a virgin (though engaged to be married) will die, the woman is innocent. In human terms the culprit will have to die.

The clone had to leave for three reasons, all literary. First, the clone is an individual entity, but the cultic reality requires that Nergal himself will marry Ereškigal. Second, N&E emulates the plot of IšD, where the escape plan was executed successfully to the letter. Ea's welcome words to Erra, "son of Ištar" (STT: 263), are a reference to Ištar's escape from the netherworld.[39] Thirdly, the creation of the double was a trick to cheat Ereškigal, his pretext "messenger of Anu" was fraudulent, so the escape is final deceit. Also this last imitates the plot of IšD.

Back in heaven, the double's mission is accomplished. Erra fulfilled his purpose and was not needed any longer. At this point he stopped to exist independently and assimilates with Nergal. Now the inconsistent use of the names demonstrates the absorption of the clone in the original.

The timing of the escape, at dawn of the seventh day is significant. It corresponds with the traditional duration of the mortuary ritual. By the eighth day the process of naturalizing in the netherworld is completed.[40] The clone escaped at the last moment as messenger, returned to heaven, purified by Ea and attained a disguise to avoid recognition by Namtar.[41] The author who dwells among his people surely knew the law, namely that Nergal deserved punishment. Enlil, for example, was punished for raping Ninlil and banished from Nippur. So, one should expect that at this point Ea would give Nergal his royal throne and send him back to Ereškigal. But Nergal was welcomed in heaven and received Ea's assistance again.

Ea's help requires explanation. Gender theories reading of "gender solidarity" seem logical (Walls 2001: 160, 165 ff.). However, Ea also helped Inana and Ištar unconditionally. This and the close intertextual relations of N&E with ID and IšD rather suggest a literary pattern. Also, in view of Ea's assertion "You will go the road you desired" (STT: 106/123), Nergal should descend of free will. Until the author will reach this stage of the discourse Namtar's odyssey is fully repeated.[42]

The second descent

The repetition of Namtar's arrival in heaven and his search for Nergal is cut off by someone, whose name is broken away, who offers Namtar the customary hospitality (STT: 360). This gesture should end the conflict that put the world order in danger. Hutter (1985: 29) and Ponchia and Luukko (2013: 21) reconstruct Nergal. I prefer to reconstruct Anu, who has the authority over cosmic matters, including hospitality in heaven.[43]

The fragmentary condition of the tablet frustrates attempts to decipher the episode in heaven, before Nergal's arrival at the netherworld. Few points can be made: The double's mission is accomplished, Erra is now unified with Nergal and both names signify one and the same divinity. The consistent reference to "that god" (DINGIR *šâšu)* instead of proper name serves to show that Ereškigal and Namtar are still unaware of the tricks; they do not know that it is Nergal. And finally, the prediction in the first descent: "You will go the road you desired" (STT: 106/123) is about to be fulfilled.

"That god" is getting ready. He takes seven items to the netherworld, like the number of gates, of which only the first endured: "You shall take a firm place, the throne" (STT: 376), the royal seat of the future king of the netherworld, a remainder of EA: 41–42. Intertextual

[39] Metaphorically, like her, he escaped from the netherworld.

[40] See Katz 2014: 433. The second time Nergal stayed during the seventh day, and when the eighth day arrived his stay in the netherworld became permanent. Harris' conclusion (2000: 141) that "His love-them-and-leave-them attitude has him in control and in charge of the situation" is not the issue, even if true. Any Mesopotamian knew that if he will stay full seven days he would be counted among the residents of the netherworld. Thus the plot streams with the prevalent theological and cultic reality.

[41] Hutter 1985: 95–98, in order to unravel the complex situation resorts to the Old Babylonian Sumerian myth of 'Enlil and Ninlil' and to Ereškigal's complaint, which he takes as a solid unit (STT: 308–314). The analogy is partial though. Ereškigal's complaint is complex; youth, virginity and impurity are three separate arguments she used. Enlil's impurity is not analogous to Ereškigal's, and it was not solved in the netherworld, the theme was simply abandoned in favor of the issue of substitute. It is analogues to the clone, who was indeed purified in heaven. But whether he was purified because he came from the dead or because of the intercourse remains unknown.

[42] Namtar delivers a threat that Ereškigal will turn the world order over. Lest they deliver Nergal she will open the gates of the netherworld. The threat, STT: 317–318 is common to N&E, Gilgameš VI: 99–100, and IšD: 19–20. The original is certainly not Gilgameš, where Ištar is not in position to act in the netherworld (against Ponchia and Luukko 2013: 60, ad. 317). Since N&E depends on IšD, the source is very likely IšD, an interpretation of ID: 74–75. Note that Ištar will break the gates. Ereškigal is the queen, she does not have to break the gates, but can simply open them.

[43] Offering hospitality in heaven is the role of Anu rather than of a god of the second or third generation. Structurally, it is the closure of the events that started off the discourse, i.e. Anu's invitation to fetch Ereškigal's ration. Note the parallel in Adapa.

relations with the throne scene in ID and IšD cannot be ignored, suggesting inverted parallelism: Nergal will sit firmly, as opposed to Ereškigal. The intertextual relations are most salient regarding the encounter with Ereškigal. The shared scene of N&E and EA converge with ID and IšD. Nergal grabs Ereškigal by the hair pulling her from her throne to the ground. STT: 399–400 *iṣbatsima ina uprīši ultu eli [kussi]* i-UD-[x-x]-*ši* is close to EA: 35b–37a *iṣṣabat Ereškigal ina šārtiša uqeddidaššimma ištu kussî ana qaqqari* (in order to behead her).[44] Whether the different phrasing represents different Old Babylonian traditions is hard to assess, because of the distance from the original.[45] Most remarkable is the effort of STT to do away with Nergal's violence and paint him as lover instead. STT: 397–403 is very similar to EA: r. 35–36 and r. 39–44, but the violent part of EA, the intention to kill Ereškigal (EA: r. 37–38) was omitted. Structurally, the violent attack on Ereškigal is framed, like a verbal enclave, by friendly gestures: STT: 398 "He approached her, and laughed" ; STT: 401–402. "He seized her by her [lo]cks, his heart full of his love to her." The version of EA portrays Nergal as intruder who came to perpetrate usurpation, intending to behead her (r. 37b). He attacks Ereškigal, squeezes out the promise of shared rulership over the netherworld (EA: r. 38–42) and only then makes love to her. The late version cuts the violence abruptly, then without a word the two directed their steps to the bedroom, as in the first descent (STT: 241–242). Nergal's violence (STT: 399–400) is not used to squeeze a promise, the couple does not negotiate his status in the netherworld, nor marriage. Wordlessly, Nergal stays on after the seventh day, thereby determines his fate to remain in the land of the dead.[46]

The peaceful happy end of the STT version suggests that the negotiations over Nergal's status and eventual marriage took place earlier in the text, lost in the 20 lines break between the two bathroom scenes (STT: 219–238). Thereby I explain the change of mind, the second bathroom scene with the ensuing sexual intercourse, and the reference to ^{d}Anu or ^{d}Anunaki in STT: 237 that indicates an arrangement on a cosmic scale. Also, it explains the omission of the violence part in the last episode (STT: 397–411) and the silent passionate reunion in the bedroom.

Conclusions: what is going on?

Mythography gives poetic expression to religious (or political) ideology. It is rooted in living cults, whose ideologists were the priests. In the third millennium Nergal and Ereškigal personified the netherworld cults of northern and southern Babylonia respectively.[47] After the Old Babylonian period the two retained their position, Nergal inflicted death and Ereškigal received his victims in the netherworld. The encounter of gods, whose divine roles did not fully overlap, formed the grounds for merger of their cults, and their opposite sexes was naturally symbolized by marriage. The chronological gap between the early and late versions accounts for the different attitudes towards the merger.

The discourse of N&E was evaluated from the perspectives of gender, feminist, power and sexuality theories (Walls 2001 and Harris 2000). These avenues of research were triggered by the opposite sexes of the protagonists. Gender and power theories can help to decode the discourse and the behavior of the protagonists. However, myths are confined to the specifics of given cults and theological stances, which occasionally digress from the theoretical models. Most of the studies applied the philological-poetical conventional tools of the Sumerian and Akkadian mythological narratives. The obvious power struggle and the sexualization of the discourse were not overlooked.

Intertextual relations link N&E with the descents of Inana (ID) and Ištar (IšD), the three mythological narratives that describe descent to the netherworld in order to depose its queen Ereškigal. Erroneous interpolation of the couplet IšD: 29–30 into STT: 172–173 confirms that STT is later than IšD. This hierarchical order institutes two-dimensional intertextual dependence of the version of STT on IšD. On the surface is a literal dimension, consisting of recycled passages taken over from IšD. A deeper layer exhibits a structural dimension. ID and IšD were used as a model for N&E. The details were tailored to the particularities of the latter. The dependence of the first descent on the plot of IšD is quite obvious, indicating a late extension.

Nergal is a warrior, whose violence is natural to his divinity. It coincides with the traditional image of masculinity, but the issue is primarily his insolence, unrelated to gender. Violence and insolence also characterize the behavior of the goddesses Inana in ID and Ištar in IšD. Ea's support of Nergal, despite of his insolence and disobedience, could signify gender solidarity but Ea's unconditional support of Inana and Ištar indicates that it is rather part of the literary model. This is how Ea acts in the mythological

[44] EA: 35b–37. He seized Ereškigal by her hair and pulled her down from her throne to the ground; STT: 399–400. He seized her by her hair and [pulled] her from [the throne].

[45] E.g. *Upru* is SB and NB, CAD U–W 189, so it cannot have been in the Old Babylonian tradition. Thus it is a later conversion of *šārtu*.

[46] It follows the conventional seven days long mortuary ritual, see above and note 40.

[47] Wiggermann 1999; Katz 2003: 385–389, 404–428. Literary sources attribute to Nergal various divine properties. His earliest attestations, written ^{d}KIŠ.UNU, date to ED IIIb. Association with En-ki and Nin-ki in the zà.mí hymn from Abu-Salabih (l. 68) evokes chthonic nature (OIP 99: 48 ll. 65–69). The nature of his relations with Meslamtaea and Erra in third-millennium Kutha is complicated.

narratives, Sumerian and Akkadian. These and other examples show that in the case of N&E close attention to intertextuality works better than social theory. IšD is the best guide to the complicated discourse of N&E.

Nergal of the last episode is a loving partner. In STT he shows affection and will to share the kingship with Ereškigal. His friendly behavior dates the redaction to the Neo-Assyrian period (Ponchia and Luukko, 2013: xxxix). In the expanding Assyrian empire Nergal's divine nature was highly respected.[48] The building inscription that commemorates the renovation of his temple E-meslam in Kutha counts him in a triad with Assur and Mullissu (RINAP 5/2, 227: 10).[49] Assurbanipal took pride in dedicating a silver lion headed eagle for the gate of his temple in Tarbiṣu (RINAP 5/2 198, r. 13).[50] A copy of the long dialogue between Erra and Išum [51] on the atrocities of war was found in this temple. It is very tempting, therefore, to hypothesize that priests of Nergal's temple in Tarbiṣu revised an earlier tradition of N&E to harmonize with Nergal's rank at the time of Assurbanipal. Their putative revision was more than an adaptation to the Neo-Assyrian stylistic conventions, but also a change of image. Notwithstanding, the revision could have been done in Kutha, of course. Positive portrayal of Nergal, as devoted husband is embedded in the Neo-Assyrian composition "Netherworld vision of Assyrian Prince".[52]

While Ereškigal is a sole ruler she is assertive and expects respect regardless of her sex. A gender mindset seems to transpire through the bathroom scene. Or does it? That Ereškigal did not try to seduce Kaka, the real messenger of Anu, indicates that the bathroom scene is a literary motif conceived specifically for Nergal in the context of N&E.[53] It is not about Ereškigal's character nor does it harbor moral judgment of her.[54] The sexualized scene aims to change the tone of the discourse from violence to love story. The sphere during the first descent is of peace and respect.

The EA version is more critical of Nergal's behavior. His escape plan that depends on demons, "Namtar's army", is violent by definition. And when the demons are in place, Nergal burst into the netherworld aggressively and seized the throne by force. Ereškigal, on the other hand, is portrayed as a victim. The different attitude towards Nergal, whose cult was at home in northern Babylonia, suggests that the tale was influenced by a competing south Babylonian ideology, and priesthood. A natural but uncertain place of origin of the biased narrative is Egida, Ninazu's temple in Enegi. In the third millennium Enegi was the southern center of the funerary cult, the counterpart of Nergal's Kutha.[55] The temple still functioned during the Old Babylonian period, perhaps for the same purpose.[56]

An assumed power struggle between the southern cult of Ereškigal and the northern of Nergal must have been determined before this myth was authored. Ereškigal was doomed to lose. She belonged to the old religious order, the Sumerian system that prevailed in the third millennium but was waning during the Old Babylonian period, replaced by Semitic cults. A failed attempt to merge the two cults was made by Šulgi.[57] The political and demographic conditions surely played in favor of the cult of Nergal. As for the theory of the marginalization of goddesses[58] (if it really occurred) I doubt that it applies to Ereškigal, who did not disappear into the god lists and her cult remained active.

A much debated question is whether the two versions are based on the same tradition or on two. The idea that the shorter EA version is an abbreviated form of the two-descents tradition is most unlikely.[59] It entails omission of important living members of the narrative. Moreover, this means that the creation of a double was in the original tradition, and that a putative redactor of EA composed the escape plan with demons especially to replace it. Technically too, an overview of the extant corpus of literary compositions shows that

[48] As Nergal was for Naram-Sin of Agade. A revival of old Sargonic tradition is not impossible.

[49] The deities "Aššur, Mullissu, and Nergal, the great gods, made the foundation(s) of my royal throne firm [...]." In Kutha his wife was Laṣ (RINAP 5/2, 227 r. 28), ever since the third millennium.

[50] "Egallammes, the bed chamber (*maštaku)* of the god Nergal that is inside the city Tarbiṣu." The same inscription mentions also Išum (r. 17 *na'du ālik mahrija*). Compare Cagni 1969: 58, Erra and Išum Tablet I: 4, 11 and *passim*.

[51] A.k.a "Erra epos" or "Erra and Išum". Edition: Cagni 1969; English translation: Cagni 1977.

[52] SAA 3, 32 (Royal propaganda). The text uses the names Ereškigal and Allatu.

[53] Hutter 1985: 86 already decoded that bathroom scene as a literary motif.

[54] Her message to the great gods that emphasizes her deprivation of love and happiness, comparable to other girls, reflects a sense of compassion toward the isolated goddess rather than critique.

[55] The division is documented in the Temple hymns, TH 14 for Ninazu's temple Egida, no. 36 for Emeslam, Nergal's temple in Kutha (Sjöberg 1969). During the funerary ritual of Šu-Sin Ereškigal receives offering there, with Ninazu (YBC 4190, rev i: 26, CDLI no. P200532). Ninazu "king of snake" is attested in Old Babylonian incantations against snakebite (YOS XI, 32: 4; CUSAS 32 41, pp. 101–102), and his temple Egida is referenced to in the colophon of an incantation: van Dijk, YOS XI, pp. 2–3 (YOS XI, 64: 20).

[56] The birth of Ninazu in the netherworld in Enlil and Ninlil (ETCSL 1.2.1: 116) reads "He ejaculated the semen of Ninazu, lord of Egida, in her womb."

[57] E.g. Urnamma A: 90 where Nergal is "Enlil of the netherworld" and ll. 98–99 recount royal symbols to Ereškigal. However, Nergal was not included in the list of offerings for the mortuary rites of his grandson Šu-Sin (CDLI no. P200532), nor in the list of netherworld gods in the Old Babylonian "Death of Gilgameš", which mentions Ereškigal (ETCSL 1.8.1.3, N3 9ff). Also the great god list (TCL 15, 10) does not reflect the situation in N&E. The close cultural, religious and economic ties of north and south Babylonia on the one hand, and the diverse characteristics of Nergal in literary traditions on the other, suggest that in southern Babylonia in the Old Babylonian period his divine nature was not firmly established.

[58] Frymer-Kensky 1992: 70–80.

[59] Gurney 1960 :107; Harris 2000; Ponchia and Luukko 2013.

texts tend to expand during transmission rather than shrink. Two different traditions, on the other hand, are plausible. For instance, one southern Babylonian and the other northern. This possibility can clarify the thematic differences, the sexualization of the plot and the transformation of Nergal from violent opponent to affectionate partner.

Structural reasons advocate one common tradition, however. The reader easily observes that the first and second descents are symmetrical to a great extent, if awkwardly. A case in point is the throne motif. The faked throne that Erra brought with him is the odd one out.[60] Its fabrication is framed as an isolated literary unit (STT: 106–123), and regarding the plot, its manifested purpose is meaningless, since Ereškigal already owns a throne (e.g. STT: 188–189). Structurally, the fake throne parallels Nergal's throne in the second descent. It makes a symmetry that blends the first descent in the texture of the discourse. Erra's arrival at the gate of the netherworld evokes the wrong reaction from Namtar, caused by the dependence on IšD and it is embedded in the plot thoughtlessly. As opposed to the aggressive sphere around, the first descent went ahead peacefully without a shred of insolence. These examples are enough to suggest that the first descent is atypical, thus a later addition to the narrative.

Assuming that the first descent is indeed a later expansion, why was it added, what does it contribute to the discourse?

The shared literary framework signifies that the text was expanded from within, through adapting the first descent to the second. Its contribution is actualized in the last episode when the violent attack on Ereškigal is abruptly cut as Nergal turns from enemy to lover (STT: 399–400 = EA: r. 35–37), and Nergal's future official role in the netherworld is omitted.

The way to the last episode of STT was paved in the first descent, in the two bathroom scenes and the interval between them. Thereby love and passion were instilled in a tale of rivalry and hostility, leading to the expected results. Then and there Ereškigal must have promised the fake Nergal marriage and shared kingship. To that end, the redactor inserted the bathroom motif and shifted Ereškigal's submission from the last scene of the original tradition to the interval between the two. The bathroom motif predicted future marriage, and six days of sexual experience kindled binding relations of the two. The interval between the two bathroom scenes makes room for an episode that narrates how or why Ea's instructions were ignored. But now Nergal had to replace his clone. Ereškigal's demand that Nergal be sent to her, and her threat to turn the world order are entrenched in this agreement.

These developments could, in fact, have been narrated in one descent. We can only speculate on the reasons of the redaction to expand the text more than fourfold over the version of EA. One reason is the use of IšD as model; another is the wish to integrate the syncretism with Erra. Both possibilities entail an actual escape with an additional descent, and the creation of the double.[61]

The gap of 700 years between the manuscripts gives us a glimpse at the power of changing political circumstances and cultic landscape over mytho-poetic expressions. That literature is entrenched in and echoes the social and political reality of its time is not new. Also myths about changing rank and role of second and third generations gods are not unique. But Nergal and Ereškigal are not the great heroes of the Mesopotamian mythography. Therefore, an interesting aspect of N&E is that it was kept, transmitted, and updated. We can imagine the path of transmission to the periphery after the Old Babylonian period. But how it passed on from the Old Babylonian to the Neo-Assyrian period remains a mystery. It is not impossible that an Old Babylonian copy was stored and later found in a Neo-Assyrian library. In such a case there was no chain of transmissions.[62] Be that as it may, the elevated status of Nergal in the Neo-Assyrian Empire justified a mytho-poetic expression of his contemporary rank and image. The etiology of Erra strongly suggests a connection between the new edition of N&E and the dialogue of Erra and Išum.[63] However, the relative order of the texts is uncertain. I find striking that the name Nergal is mentioned only twice in the account of the atrocities that his 'former double' Erra inflicted on Babylonia: in tablet IIIc: 31 Nergal is likened to Ninurta when he killed the Asakku, really an honor, and in tablet V: 39 he receives the praises together with Išum.[64]

N&E answers the question of how Nergal became the king of the netherworld. Yet, it brings up a fundamental problem concerning his biography. The theological core of N&E counts Nergal among the gods of heaven and outlines a change of his divine affiliation. The Old Babylonian Sumerian hymn Nergal C: 47–8 extols him as a god of heaven and netherworld, and his astral manifestation as the planet Mars associates Nergal with

[60] Reiner (1985: 56–58) observed that the appearance of Nergal "incognito" instead of "culprit" "necessitates not only a trip back and forth by Nergal...but also two trips of Namtar to heaven and back." She concluded that, the additional episodes were added in the course of elaboration, which changed the protagonists.

[61] Neo-Assyrian versions of Old Babylonian traditions are usually longer. Opposite examples are likewise known, such as the Kuthean legend of Naram-Sin.

[62] Imagine e.g. a copy taken from Babylon by Tukulti-Ninurta I that was recovered hundreds of years later.

[63] Cagni 1969.

[64] Erra and Išum tablet IIIc: 31 *šá qurādu* (ur.sag) ^{d}*Nergal* (u.gur) *ki-i u$_4$-me [tāhāzi] a-šak-ki* [ ]. and V: 39 *šanat* (mu.meš) *la nibi ta-nit-ti bēli rabî* ^{d}*Nergal* (en.ga. u.gur) *u qu-[ra-du* ^{d}*išum*].

heaven.[65] However, Nergal appears as a netherworld god already in sources of the mid third millennium, and according to the Old Babylonian 'Enlil and Ninlil': 90 he was born in the netherworld.[66] A solid bipolar nature is hardly possible, not the least in N&E that emphasizes the separation of heaven from the netherworld. An Old Babylonian southern scribe might not know Nergal's exact status in the netherworld, but it is very unlikely that he would not know that he is a netherworld god. So why was Nergal portrayed as heavenly god? As a god of heaven Nergal could not have issues with Ereškigal and no reason to insult her or engage with the netherworld in any way. Indeed, his insolent behavior towards Ereškigal has no explanation in any version. Actually, counting Nergal among the gods of heaven denies his chthonic affiliation and his legitimate claim for kingship over the netherworld. Therefore, the discourse that identifies Nergal as a heavenly god makes a polemic ideological statement that puts the legitimacy of his cult in question.

The Neo-Assyrian version that expanded the text and changed its tone still counts Nergal among the gods of heaven. His divine agency as military campaigner indeed situates him in a terrestrial setting. Also, does his embodiment as planet Mars qualify Nergal as a heaven god and imbue him with bipolar quality? The answer is no. In astral manifestations celestial bodies conceptualize divine agency, which is always expressed as human experience, regardless of the god's affiliation with heaven or earth. The astral embodiment of Nergal, planet Mars, represents his divine agency that manifests itself on earth, while the god himself resides in the netherworld. It seems that the Neo-Assyrian redactor was not disturbed by the heavenly setting. His model was the descent of Inana-Ištar who departed from heaven, and his interest was invested in the end of the tale, the happy unification of the couple.

[65] Invocations of Erra as a celestial body in an Old Babylonian prayer to the gods of the night may have conceptualized the heavenly position of Nergal through their association since the third millennium.

[66] Additional sources: Temple hymn no. 36; Urnamma A: 90; 6N–T 636: 6 (Or.Sue. XXIII–XXIV 1976: 167); TCL 15, 10, col. iv: 36.

Abbreviations used

CRRAI	Compte rendu de la Rencontre Assyriologique lnternationale.
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology.
EA	J. A. Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna-Tafeln (VAB 2). Leipzig: 1915.
ETCSL	The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumertian Literature.
LKA	E. Ebeling, Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur. Berlin 1953.
Or.Sue	Orientalia Suecana. Upsala 1976.
RINAP 5/2	J Jeffers and J. Novotny 2023. *The Royal Inscriptions of Ashurbanipal (668–631 BC), Aššur-etal-ilāni (630-627 BC), and Sîn-šarra-iškun (626–612 BC), Kings of Assyria Part 2* (RINAP 5/2). University Park: Eisenbrauns.
RlA	Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archaologie.
SAA	State Archaives of Assyria.
STT	O.R. Gurney and J. J. Finkelstein, The Sultantepe Tablets.
TCL	Textes cunéiformes Musées du Louvre (Paris 1910 ff.).
UHF	M.J Geller, UDUG-HUL Forrunners.
Urnamma A	Urnamma Hymn A. (see E. Flückiger-Hawkerm 1999).
UET	Ur Excavation Texts (London 1928 ff.).
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek (Leipzig 1907 ff.).
YOS	Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts (1915ff.).

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Chapter 38:
In his image: God or ruler?
A stone relief from the Iron IIA cultic precinct at Tel Moẓa

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Abstract. This paper examines a broken stone relief recently discovered in the foundations of the large temple in the Iron Age cultic precinct at Tel Moẓa, near Jerusalem. The precinct, spanning most or all of the Iron II, contains two superimposed temples: a modest Early Iron IIA temple and a larger Late Iron IIA temple. The stone relief, characteristic of Iron IIA public religious architecture in the northern Levant, is analyzed within the precinct's context and the broader framework of ancient Near Eastern cultic practices. We propose that the relief was originally part of the early temple and depicted an important figure, likely a ruler or deity, and that its deliberate breaking and burial were ritual acts intended to transfer the sanctity and power of the old temple to the new one and that they convey reverence and continuity. These ritual practices observed at Moẓa suggest a broader mirroring of cultic patterns from the northern Levant to the Iron Age southern Levent than previously discerned.

Keywords: Levantine archaeology, Early Iron Age, Judah, Ancient Near Eastern religion, Israelite religion, temple and cult, iconography, stone relief

When the stone relief was discovered at Tel Moẓa, the first person we immediately contacted was Tallay Ornan, reverently inviting her to come and inspect the artifact in person and to validate or challenge our initial identification. It is a profound honor and a true privilege to dedicate this paper to Tallay Ornan – a mentor, a teacher, a colleague, and a friend.

Introduction

Archaeological work carried out at Tel Moẓa since 1993, comprising intermittent salvage excavations till 2013 on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Greenhut and De Groot 2009; Kisilvitz *et al.* 2014) and a research project launched in 2019 on behalf of Tel Aviv University, revealed the remains of an economic–religious Iron Age center.[1] The most prominent Iron Age element exposed at the site is a large temple complex situated at its center (Temple 4601), whose 'temple in antis' architectural plan had been previously exemplified in the Iron Age by structures found in the northern Levant (notably at ʿAin Dara, Tell Tayinat, and Tell Afis) and by the biblical description of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. The Moẓa temple in antis complex was constructed at the start of the Late Iron IIA (late 10th/early 9th century BCE) and continued to exist during most of the Iron II, at least until the beginning of the 7th century BCE (Kisilevitz 2015; Kisilevitz and Lipschits 2020). The courtyard of the temple overlaid the remains of a smaller and more modest structure (Temple 8528), constructed in the Early Iron IIA (early 10th century BCE; see below), that differed in its plan (Figure 1).

During the preparation of the area for the excavation season of summer 2021, a fragment of a stone artifact bearing a carved relief on one of its sides was found integrated into the core of the northern wall of Temple 4601 (Figure 2), in an area that was previousely exposed during the 1993 and 2013 seasons. The stone is worn and broken but it is possible to distinguish a relief depicting anthropomorphic legs of a figure: a ruler, a god, or a mythical being. This artifact belongs to a type of stone relief that is generally characteristic of the northern Levantine–southern Anatolian sphere in the Iron IIA (11th–9th centuries BCE), where it appears in public

[1] The research program on behalf of Tel Aviv University incorporates the salvage excavations and the Tel Moẓa Expedition Project, currently underway, directed by S. Kisilevitz and O. Lipschits. Between 2020 and 2023, the research was supported by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Grants nos. AZ 65/V/19 and AZ 24/F/20) and the Israel Science Foundation (Grant no. 252/20).
This paper is an expanded version of a recent Hebrew paper (Kisilevitz *et al.* 2022).

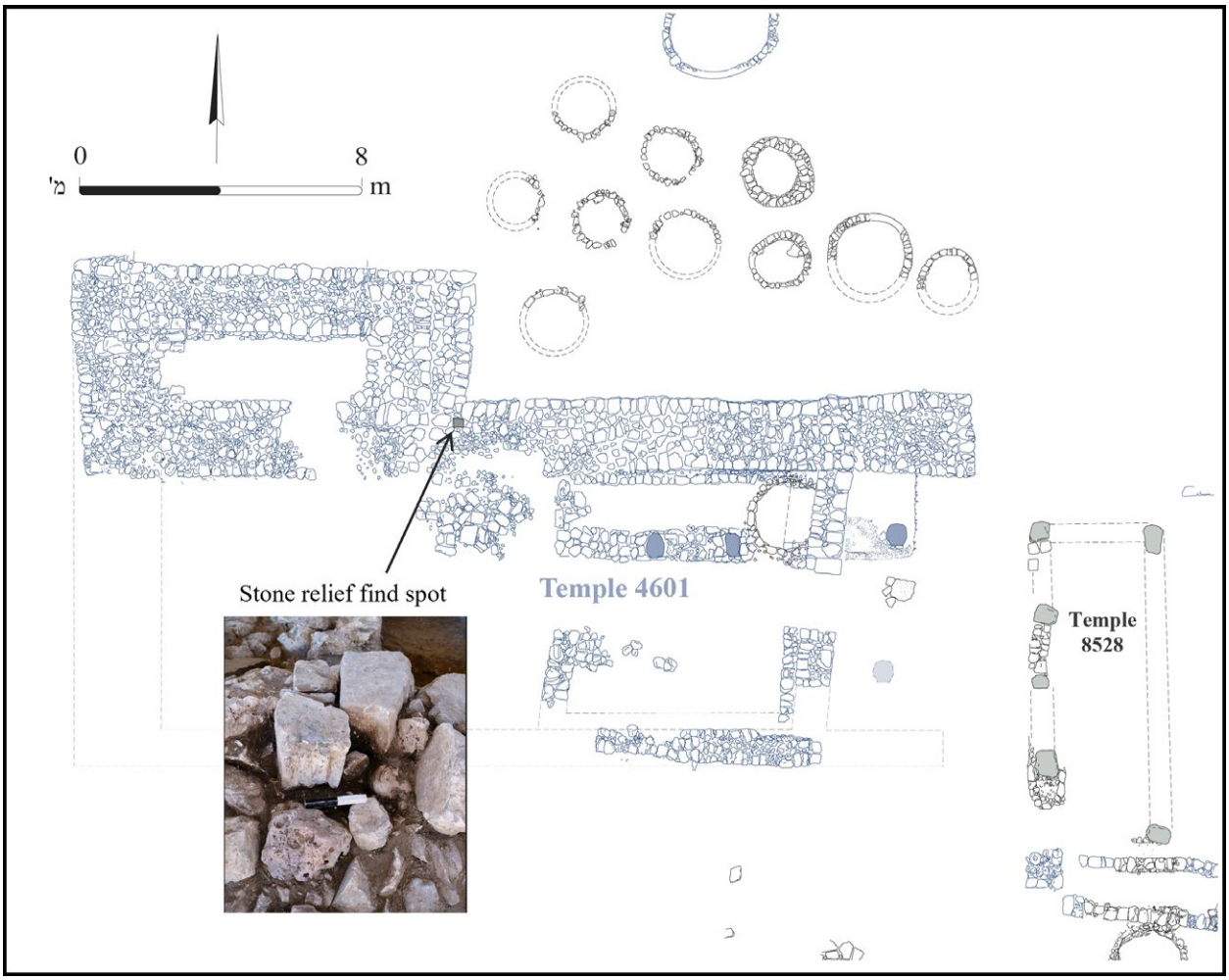

Figure 1. Temple 8528 of the Early Iron IIA and superseding Temple 4601 of the Late Iron IIA in which the stone relief was detected in the northern wall at the start of the 2021 season. Prepared by by Y. Shmidov.

buildings, mainly in temples and palaces, but it was not previously known from the southern Levant. As such, the discovery of this stone relief at Moẓa, originating in a clear cultic context, suggests that the custom of placing stone reliefs in temples prevailed also in the southern Levant. Though it was found in secondary use, the stratigraphic location and style of the relief from Moẓa imply that it originates in Temple 8528, and it is proposed that the integration of the broken stone in the core of the wall of Temple 4601 should be seen as an expression of the continuity of worship in which the sanctity of the former temple was transferred to the new one.

Tel Moẓa in the Early Iron Age and the development of the cultic precinct

Tel Moẓa is situated on the lower part of a slope that descends to the south towards a wide and lush valley in the western entrances of Jerusalem, about 7 km northwest of the city. This area (henceforth, the Moẓa basin) is characterized by fertile soil and abundant springs, and it was inhabited almost continuously from prehistoric times to the present day. The recent discovery of a large Neolithic site in the basin, southwest of the tel, in which silos, storage buildings, and botanical remains were found, attests that the inhabitants of the region subsisted on a crop-based agricultural economy since prehistoric times (Vardi, Yegorov, and Khalaily 2020: 111). This is also attested by the large storage buildings, hundreds of holemouth storage jars, and dozens of silos that typified the Iron Age site at Tel Moẓa (Greenhut and De Groot 2009; Kisilevitz and Lipschits 2020).

Most of the remains excavated at the site date to the Iron II (10th–early 6th centuries BCE) –when it served as an industrial/economic-cultic/religious center– and consist of silos and storage structures accompanied by built installations and administrative spaces that developed alongside the establishment of a cultic precinct. The core of the Iron Age site is in the central-western part of the slope (Area B), in an area that spans three topographic steps that descend to the southwest

Figure 2. The stone relief, broken and upside down in situ in the core of the northern wall of Temple 4601 at the start of the 2021 season. Photo by D.R. Moulis.

and is also the location of the cultic precinct and the locale focused on in this paper.

The earliest Iron Age remains date to the Iron IB–Early Iron IIA (11th–10th centuries BCE) and comprised stone-lined silos on the upper and middle terraces of Area B (Figure 1) alongside installations that consisted primarily of mortars and adjacent rounded stone-built elements in the lower terrace to their south and southwest (Greenhut and De Groot 2009: 43–47, plan 2.10, figs. 2.39–2.40).[2] The dense distribution of the silos implies that they were part of an extensive field of silos that stretched across the upper terraces and accommodated high-volume storage of crop yield, while the installations in the lower terrace reflect small-scale production and the processing of crop products. Collectively, the remains attest that from its inception the Iron Age site served as an economic hub for the storage and redistribution of crops (grain and perhaps pulses), reflecting the communal endeavor of a local population.

The temples were constructed in the Iron IIA and partially severed and overlaid the field of silos (Figure 1). Initially, a modest temple was erected in the Early Iron IIA (Temple 8528), inserted in the center of the economic area amid the field of silos which, though partially razed, continued to function in tandem with the temple, and was incorporated into a temenos along with auxiliary spaces (henceforth the production area) that were constructed to its southwest, on a lower terrace. In the Late Iron IIA the modest shrine was replaced by a larger temple (Temple 4601) and the production area was extended east, forming a monumental and substantially expanded cultic precinct that prevailed throughout most, if not all the Iron II.[3] The setting of

[2] Silos dug into a Middle Bronze II gravel fill and attributed to the Iron IB–early Iron IIA, were found in the upper and middle terraces of Area B, primarily in areas that are beyond the boundaries of the temples. They include remains of eleven silos exposed north of Temple 4601, a silo exposed below the northeastern corner of this temple, and several silos that were partially exposed below the Late Iron IIA complex - south and east of Temple 8528 (not illustrated). It is difficult to ascertain the precise dating of the creation of the silos, due to the absence of associated external floors and the innate difficulty in dating pit-like installations, but their stratigraphic relationship to the Iron IIA temples coupled with the Iron IIA pottery which constituted the latest material in the fills that occupied the lower part of the excavated silos (e.g., Greenhut and De Groot 2009: 45, fig. 3.7:8–11) indicates that the silo field was established prior to the construction of Temple 8528 in the Early Iron IIA and that parts of it continued to function alongside the temple but that they were mostly decommissioned by the Late Iron IIA. Therefore, the inception of the silo field is tentatively attributed to the Iron IB.

[3] The finds attest the site prevailed throughout the Iron II and that it continued to exist, in a diminished capacity, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE and into the Persian period. Intrusions,

the temples in the heart of the site, amidst the zone of economic activity, was undoubtedly designed to ensure the prosperity of the public site and of the population who maintained it, and the construction of the temples and their associated paraphernalia and auxiliary spaces, particularly regarding Temple 4601, reflects the development of complex economic and social systems and indicates the existence of social hierarchy in the site and its vicinity. The flourishing of the site throughout the Iron II is evidenced by the concurrent development and growth of the economic and cultic/religious spheres, with auxiliary structures that serviced administrative, storage, and craft productions established in association with the silos and storage buildings of the former and the temples of the latter. The remains suggest that the site was a public endeavor of a population that resided upslope and in settlements nearby, most likely on the hills surrounding the Moẓa Basin, and they reflect the development of a complex society –the Moẓa Polity– in this region.[4]

Temple 8528 was built in the center of area B. Its construction involved reshaping the terrain by the removal of earlier layers, including part of the silos, to expand the middle terrace and form a leveled surface for the new structure, its adjoining open spaces, and an east-west corridor that fronted it to the south and provided access into the cultic precinct. The temple structure and its adjoining spaces were exposed primarily below the courtyard of Temple 4601. The built elements were mostly removed when Temple 8528 was replaced with Temple 4601, but the remains, though scant, illustrate the general outline of the building.[5]

Temple 8528 was a rectangular structure that was oriented to the south and comprised columns set between built walls. The remains include large, non-uniform, and irregular rectangular-shaped stone bases with remains of walls between them and a plaster floor that extended south, through an entrance that was delineated by oval installations abutting the southern column bases. The floor ascended to open spaces to the east and west of the structure and descended to the corridor to its south and it was laid either directly on Middle Bronze II gravel fill or on bedding in which the latest pottery dates to the Early Iron IIA. Excavation of fill below the floor of Temple 4601, which was built directly above the remains of Temple 8528, yielded fragments of cultic vessels, including stands, chalices, and a cup and saucer, that indicate an earlier cultic function in this area, as well as 'common ware' pottery that dates primarily to the Early Iron IIA but contained few Late Iron IIA sherds. Excavation south of the courtyard of Temple 4601 revealed a foundation deposit that was placed on the corridor floor of the previous phase and included intact cultic vessels. Together, the finds indicate that Temple 8528 was built in the Early Iron IIA (likely in the first half of the 10th century BCE) and continued to function until the construction of Temple 4601 at the end of the 10th or early 9th century BCE. The partial preservation of the extant remains of Temple 8528 is mainly due to the systematic dismantling and removal of its elements, apart from some of its foundation courses, to facilitate the construction of Temple 4601 whose floor and installations were laid no more than 15 cm above the elements and floors of the earlier temple. The absence of vessels and artifacts on the preserved segments of the floors of Temple 8528, in places where it was exposed below surfaces of the subsequent temple of the Late Iron IIA, alongside the foundation deposit to the south, indicates that the temple was cleared prior to its elimination, and it is likely that some of these vessels and artifacts were utilized in the new temple.

Temple 4601 was larger than the preceding structure. It was constructed according to an architectural plan that typified monumental temples in the Levant since the 3rd millennium BCE and had previously been exemplified in the Iron Age by temples in the northern Levant and by the biblical description of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. This plan, typically referred to as the "North-Syrian temple" or "temple in antis," is characterized by a longroom (at times encased by additional chambers) with protruding antae that delineated a portico (or anteroom) that contained pillars flanking the entrance. A wide courtyard fronted the temple to the east and contained a stone-built altar, situated along a central axis across the entrance, a stone-built offering table at its northern edge, and a plaster floor that extended throughout and abutted

primarily massive pitting and construction in the Persian-Hellenistic period (4th–3rd centuries BCE), severely damaged the early phases in the western part of the precinct – completely removing the later (post 8th c BCE) phases and annihilating the southwestern part of Temple 4601. Despite the inhibiting state of preservation of the temple complex, the remains in the production area imply that it continued to be in use, with passage to the temple complex, at least till the Early Iron IIC (7th century BCE) and possibly till the end of the period.

[4] The existence of the developing economic-religious center at Tel Moẓa during the early phases of the Iron Age (Iron I and Iron IIA) indicates the existence of a local population that established and maintained the site. Though settlements dated to these phases are generally unknown in the Moẓa region, the existence of contemporary domestic sites on the surrounding hilltops is inferred from the identification of Iron II sites nearby; a site located upslope to the northwest of the tel near Ein Hamevasser (Edelstein and Kislev 1981; cf. Ben-Shlomo 2019: 241) and a site located across the valley on the top of a hill to the southwest of the tel (observed by Kisilevitz in 2014 during archaeological supervision of works conducted on behalf of the IIA an a hill in the eastern part of Beit Zayit), albeit no data regarding the phasing of these sites is available. It is further strengthened by the recent discovery of an early Iron Age site at Mitzpe Nof, located on a hill across the basin and southeast of the tell, in excavations carried out by Ido Wachtel on behalf of the Hebrew University (personal communication).

[5] The eastern wall of Temple 8528 was not preserved, but excavation in 2023 revealed the robber trench of this wall and plaster floors to its west –in the temple structure– and east –approximately ten centimeters higher and along a narrow strip that formed the northeastern extent of the early precinct.

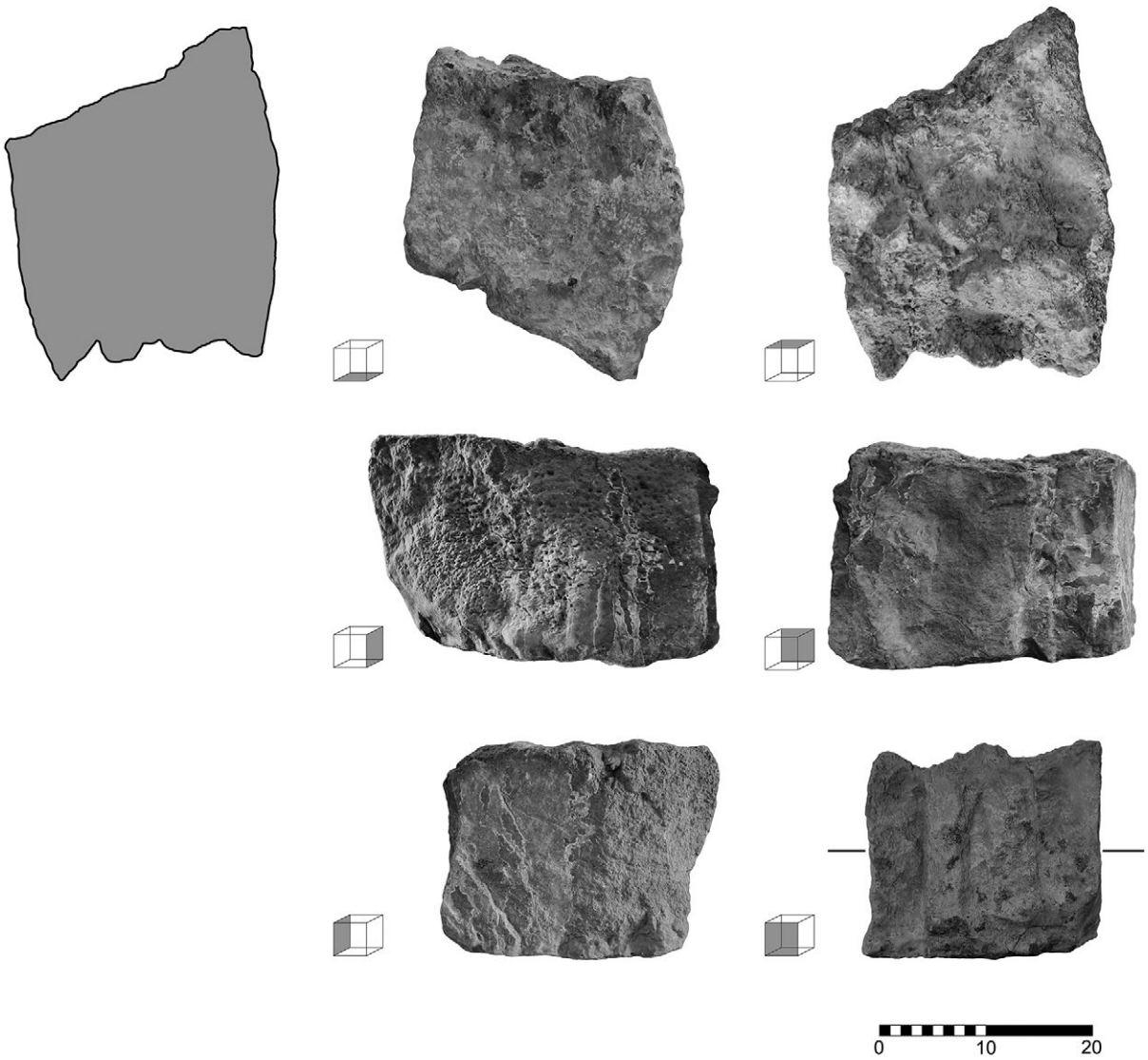

Figure 3. The stone relief. Views of the faces produced from a 3-D model by Roy Albag.

these installations. This courtyard sealed the remains of Temple 8528, apart from the two northern column bases which were incorporated into Temple 4601. These column bases remained visible, protruding slightly above the floor level of the new temple's courtyard. They formed the east-west line along which the column base of the new portico was set north of the entrance to Temple 4601. The architectural remains attest to a clear continuity between the two superimposed temples, both in the integration of the earlier column bases and in maintaining the alignment. The continuity is also reflected by the minor variance in the elevation of the floor levels between the two temples, which indicates that the general height of the surfaces in this area did not change significantly, and by the continued use of similar vessel types when Temple 4601 was established.

The stone relief from Tel Moẓa

The stone is 19–24 cm wide, 20 cm high, and 20–32 cm thick (Figures 3 and 4). The lower part is quite smooth and forms a straight base, and the upper part has not survived. The back is broken and segments of it had detached, and it seems that parts of the front broke off too. The item was found broken and upside down –the carved side facing south– integrated into the core of the northern wall of Temple 4601 where it was set between stones and soil (cf. Figures 1 and 2). The stone was not outwardly unique in its shape nor was it prominently located, and it is only the worn relief on it that designates it as a remnant of an exceptional object. The discovery of the relief in secondary use in the core of the wall of Temple 4601 attests that it originates in an earlier structure.

Figure 4. The stone relief. Photo by S. Flit.

The stone is a fine-grained laminar dolomite, light colored with a pink tint. It contains microscopic clusters of red laminae that were identified in an XRF analysis as rich iron oxide. One of the facets is lined with a calcite varnish about one millimeter thick, which often hides the lamination, and a calcite vein 1–2 mm thick, crosses the lamination. This stone is of local origin, apparently from the Beit Meir formation which is characteristic of the valley below the site. It is very worn and weathered, and post-depositional processes and environmental damage are evident on its surfaces. Lichens that grew on the areas that were exposed to the elements since the stone was first unearthed (initially in 1993) form a partial dark cover that extends mainly on the façade (the relief side) and the bottom surface. The upper face is rough on a millimeter scale, apparently as a result of dissolution-precipitation processes by microbes that were thriving at the bottom of the stone, either before it was hewn or after it was set on the surface. The relief does not appear to be the result of a spontaneous process but rather a product of deliberate carving. The artisan utilized the calcite vein to create a tiering that represents the back edge of the right leg. Signs of intentional breaking are also evident on other faces of the stones and may reflect traces of the processing and production of the artifact. The right side of the stone has a straight side that seems to denote its original edge, while the left side is curved and could be the result of breakage.

The relief was formed as a low carving, and due to the weathering of the stone, it is impossible to distinguish chisel marks or the emphasis of details in the imagery.

Most of the stone's front is covered by the relief depicting a figure that is preserved from the lower part of the waist to the ankles, with both legs facing left in a slightly spread stance. The preserved size of this lower part of the figure is about 19 cm high, the width of each leg is about 4 cm, and the width of the waist is about 9 cm. Based on the dimensions and proportions of the preserved parts it seems that the full height of the figure would have been 40–45 cm.

The surviving relief comprises the legs and the lower hip area and indicates that the bottom part of the figure was anthropomorphic, but given the absence of its upper part, the lack of emphasis of body parts or any clothing or adornments that form clear markers, the nature and the identity of the figure are uncertain. To the right of the figure, broken remains of an elevated embossment suggest that the image was delineated by a raised frame. To the left of the figure, the front had an irregular surface that could denote remains of the relief that had broken off, and it is unclear whether the relief had originally ended directly to the left of the figure or whether it was wider and included other elements, perhaps even an additional figure which the preserved figure was facing.

Stone reliefs in Southwest Asia in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages

Stone reliefs exhibiting carved figures were found at various sites throughout the northern Levant and southern Anatolia, mainly in focal public buildings and in cultic contexts (Figure 5). Artifacts of this type appeared since the Late Bronze Age, but this phenomenon reached its zenith at the beginning of the Iron II (10th–9th centuries BCE). The reliefs from this period were incorporated into monumental construction in large numbers and in a wide variety of pictorial representations during this period (Gilibert 2011: 119–125; Mierse 2012: 212–214) and form the context for understanding the relief found at Moẓa. The emergence of this phenomenon in the Iron II corresponds to the formation of socio-political systems, which included the establishment of temples and administrative buildings (and palaces) by the local elites to establish the power and status of the local rulers (Harmanşah 2007: 81–83). Most of the reliefs were carved on limestone or basalt slabs, which were used as standing stones (stelae) or orthostats, and lined walls or podiums in temples, often as part of a series of reliefs that created a scene. The representations in the reliefs were varied and included decorative elements as well as figures of gods and mythical figures, rulers and humans. Figures whose bottom part was anthropomorphic were usually depicted with their legs pointing in one direction in an open stance and dressed in a skirt or a tunic.

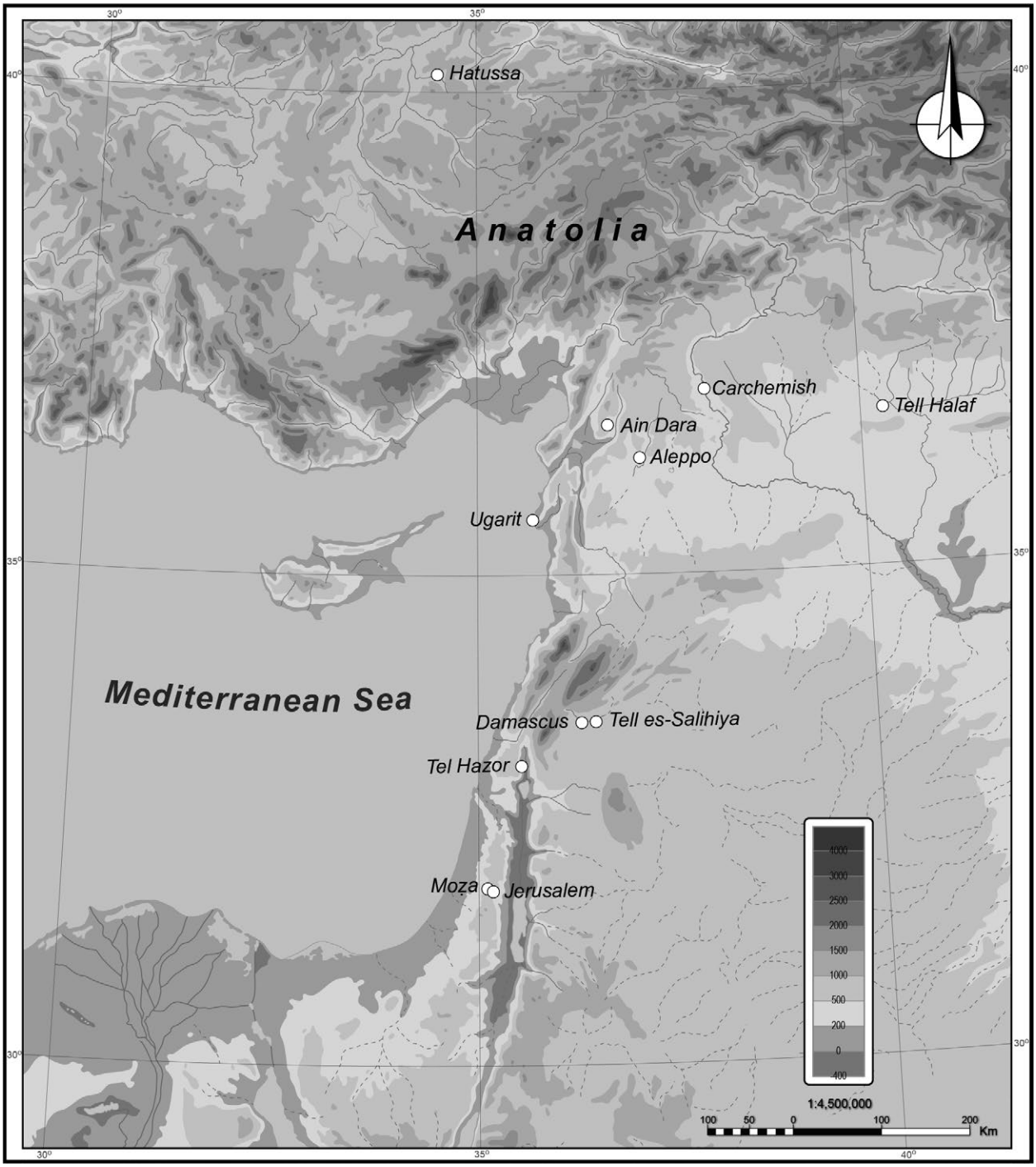

Figure 5. Map of the Levant and the Syro-Anatolian region illustrating key sites and the main sites mentioned in the text which yielded stone reliefs. Produced by I. Ben-Ezra.

The stone reliefs served as intermediary agents between humans and gods and sometimes formed the object of worship itself (cf. Hundley 2013: 202, no. 267). Their existence attests to the significance of the structure in which they stood and provides insights into both the ruling elite who placed them and the figures represented in them. For example, in the Temple of the storm god of Aleppo at ancient Ḥalab, a relief depicting a god was set in the structure already in the Late Bronze Age, but the placement of stone reliefs became common mainly from the beginning of the Iron Age (11th–10th centuries BCE) when many reliefs were placed along the walls of the temple and the podium. These include the prominent image of Taita, King of

Palistin /Walistin, identified by an inscription (Hawkins 2011: 40–44, figs. 3–7), placed next to the relief of the storm god in the 11th century BCE. Another series of reliefs depicting a variety of human figures, deities, and mythical creatures, was set in the temple in the late 10th century BCE (e.g., Kohlmeyer 2009). The image of the king next to the image of the god and facing him formed a new scene that certified the eminence of the king and transmitted the association and importance of both figures within a clear cultic context. In the reliefs from the Aleppo temple, as in most other reliefs of the period, representations of deities, such as the storm god and a torch-bearing god (Kohlmeyer 2009: 192–193, 201), and of human figures, such as King Taita (Kohlmeyer 2009: 198), are depicted in a similar stance in which their legs are in a stride and turned in the same direction and they are dressed in a similar skirt/tunic. The identification of the gods and their distinction from human figures would not have been possible without attributes such as the horned hat and striking position that characterized divine imagery in the ancient Near East, while the identification of Taita would not have been possible if it were not for the accompanying inscription.

Whether stelae or orthostats, the Iron Age reliefs in the northern Levant were generally found as part of a series and not as single reliefs. While these reliefs were usually quite large, reliefs dated to the 10th–9th centuries BCE from the so-called temple-palace of King Kapara at Tell Halaf (Gozan) and depicting figures presented in a similar pictorial style (Orthman 1971: 120; Oppenheim 2009: 141–185) form two series, one particularly large (about 150 cm high) and the other unusually small (about 60 cm high). The latter are only slightly larger than the Moẓa relief and depict figures presented in a similar stance (e.g., Orthman 1971: tf. 44:h).[6] These reliefs have been identified as orthostats, but some of them may have originally been used as stelae (Canby 1976: 114–166, pl. XVIIIa+b).

Geographically, the closest reliefs to Moẓa belong to a group of basalt stelae that depict a figure with a human body and a bull's head, found at the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee, the Golan, the Bashan, and the northern Gilead (Bernett and Keel 1998; Ornan 2001; Wimmer and Janaydeh 2011); however, these artifacts significantly differ from the Moẓa relief stylistically. Conversely, a relief on a limestone slab found at the end of the 19th century not in situ in the western part of Tell es-Salahiyeh in Syria, about 15 km east of Damascus (Porter 1885: 383–384) constitutes a close parallel to the relief from Moẓa.[7] The relief from Tell es-Salahiyeh (100–115 cm high, 80–85 cm wide, and 18–22 cm thick) depicts an anthropomorphic figure that is holding a staff in one hand and has a thick beard, a short skirt, and sandals. It is more than double the height of the Moẓa relief, though it is narrower, and is similarly fractured and worn. Despite its state of preservation, and notwithstanding the disparity in their measurements, the similarity between the two reliefs is evident most notably in the outline of the body from the hips downwards as well as in the stance and direction of the legs, and it seems that the two figures have similar proportions within their respective scales. The stone from Tell es-Salahiyeh was not found in a stratigraphic context, and it is not known whether it served as a stela or an orthostat. The relief was dated to the beginning of the first millennium BCE and the figure in it has been identified as either a ruler or priest in the Assyrian style based on comparative analysis to other parallels (Börker-Klähn 1982: 225, no. 249).

The identification and significance of the figure in the Moẓa Relief

The stone relief from Moẓa is poorly preserved and comprises only the lower and worn part of an anthropomorphic figure. Even so, the stance of the personage is characteristic in representations on Iron II stone reliefs from the northern Levant. Additionally, the form of the figure, its carving as a stone relief, its dating, and its discovery in a temple within a cultic precinct, demonstrate that it is an artifact of great significance –depicting a figure that represents a ruler, a deity, or mythical creature– that belongs to the type of reliefs known from public buildings, especially in temples and palaces, from the early Iron Age in the northern Levant. Since the relief was deposited in Temple 4601 in secondary use and was therefore originally in use in an earlier cultic structure, its provenance must be associated with Temple 8528 of the Early Iron IIA.

Stelae and orthostats depicted similar representations, and therefore the distinction between the artifacts is largely based on the shape of the stone, the ratio of its thickness to its height and width, and the level of finish of the back. Stone slabs that are significantly thinner in relation to their height and width and have a smooth back are usually defined as orthostats. The stone from Moẓa is thick in relation to its presumed height, and therefore we suggest that it was a stela and not an orthostat. Though this relief was not found in its original context, the absence of additional reliefs, expected in the case of orthostats that were ordinarily placed in series, may strengthen the argument that it was a unique item, which served as an independent object in the temple.

[6] The smaller series appears to predate the large reliefs (and see Winter 1989 for a discussion of the dating).

[7] We thank A. Kleiman, who brought the relief from Tell es-Salahiyeh to our attention and shared the references with us immediately after the discovery of the relief.

The identity of the figure in the relief from Moẓa is also difficult to define. Representations of gods and humans appeared, together and separately, in reliefs in the northern Levant and were depicted undistinguishably from the waist down. Since the upper part of the figure from Moẓa is missing, and the relief bears no identifying marks, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether this figure represented a god or some other important figure. However, the context of the relief and its distinctiveness indicates that the figure depicted in it was an important character within the religious system and may have been the object of worship itself.

The relief from Moẓa reflects the adoption of the custom of placing stone reliefs as part of a wider cultural phenomenon, known from the northern Levant during the Iron IIA. The backdrop for its appearance at a site that served as a religious-economic center, and at a time when a ruling elite developed in the site and within the population living in its vicinity, is similar to the context of the appearance of reliefs of this kind in the political systems that developed during this period in the northern Levant. The schematic style of the relief from Moẓa –a site on the margins of the cultural periphery of the ancient Near East during this period– and to a lesser extent also of the relief from Tell es-Salahiyeh, may have resulted from the distance of these sites from the centers of production and use of the reliefs in the northern Levant.

The adoption of elements and symbolism from the cultic traditions of the ancient Near East, their local assimilation and production, is not unusual at Moẓa. It is exemplified in certain aspects of the architectural plan of Temple 4601 and its cultic artifacts. Stone reliefs, however, are too scarce to provide a coherent picture (Wightman 2007: 1012). But it can be supposed that the artisan who created the relief at Moẓa drew inspiration from similar artifacts that were located in the surrounding region –within the southern Levant– that are currently unknown in the archaeological record.

Cultic traditions based on long-standing religious ideologies of the ancient Near East are expressed not only in the type of the artifact and the imagery it depicts but also in its breaking and burial in the wall of Temple 4601. The breaking of cultic objects and their deposition in the prevailing cult complex as part of a ritual activity that accompanies the building or refurbishing of a temple in an expression of reverence is based on the belief that the sanctity of a cultic/religious place or object (or one that was used in cultic activity) is preserved even after it has ceased function. This concept was observed in the ancient Near East from the Neolithic period and commonly in the Bronze and Iron Ages. This practice is characterized not only by objects but also by the lasting sanctity of places and buildings, which is reflected in the recurrent renovation and construction of temples over hundreds and thousands of years in the same location (cf. Kamlah 2012; Mierse 2012), such as the 2nd millennium BCE temples at Tel Hazor (Zuckerman 2011 and 2012), at Shechem /Tel Balata (Stager 2003), at Tel Bet Shean (Mazar 2006: 34; Id. 2009: 27–28; Mullins 2012: 144–151), at Tel Megiddo (Kleiman *et al.* 2017: 40–42) and at Pella /Ṭabaqāt Fahil (Bourke 2012); the latter two also during the Iron IIA and to this day at Mount Gerizim (for the date of the establishment of the complex, see Arie 2021) and on the Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem.

The enduring sanctity of cult places attests to their importance to the host communities, being memorial sites –places where communities expressed their perception of the past and used them as part of the creation of their collective identity (Cosmopoulos 2014).

During the long lifespan of the cultic precinct at Moẓa, it underwent structural changes, akin to those documented and traced in other temples of the Bronze and Iron Ages in the ancient Near East. The transition from Temple 8528 to Temple 4601 included the dismantling of walls down to the foundation level and the utilization of elements and perhaps some of the artifacts in the new temple that replaced the earlier one and was built above its remains, and the development of Temple 4601 similarly involved removal or incorporation of earlier elements in refurbished phases alongside the expansion of the precinct and the addition of auxiliary rooms; with the sacredness of the area preserved throughout these activities.

We suggest that the stone relief exemplifies this continuity: it was manufactured as a cultic focal point for Temple 8528, then broken to defuse its functionality and incorporated into the foundations of Temple 4601, thereby transmitting its sacredness to the new temple, and imbuing it with power. It can be assumed that this action was accompanied by ritual ceremonies, which focused both on the dismantling of the early temple and on the foundation of the new temple (cf. Swenson 2015). The utilization of the stones from the early temple in the construction of the new temple provided the latter with building materials, but, more importantly, perpetuated the sacredness of the earlier temple and bestowed the power of the god/s into the temple that replaced (and continued) it. This action must have linked the two temples both tangibly and spiritually and provided an emotional value that connected the members of the community who built the new temple to their ancestors who built and maintained the earlier temple and venerated their god/s in it. It may have even been perceived as patronage of the ancestors or harnessing of their power to strengthen the new temple and its sanctity and must have exalted the authority of

the ruling elite, as it was under its auspice that the new temple was constructed.

Summary

The stone relief from Moẓa belongs to a type that is known in the northern Levant during this period, and its discovery, while unforeseen, is puzzling only given the absence of similar artifacts in the southern Levant. The Iron IIA temples that are being gradually unearthed at Moẓa themselves constitute an anomaly in the archaeological corpus of the period, in which temples (let alone the continued construction of temples in one site) are rarely found in the southern Levant (apart from Philistia), especially in the regions of Judah and Israel. Therefore, it should not be surprising that cultic artifacts that have not yet been found in the southern Levant will be discovered in future excavations—at Moẓa and at other sites.

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Chapter 39:
The Sanctuary of Ataroth and its inscriptions

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Abstract. The article discusses two topics that emerged from the excavations conducted at Khirbet 'Ataruz (biblical Ataroth). First, it presents the double turn in the history of Ataroth's sanctuary, from Moabite to Israelite and later from Israelite to Moabite. It then clarifies the significance of these transformations for the sanctuary and its patron gods. Second, it discusses in detail the two inscriptions incised on a cylindrical stone altar that were discovered in the Moabite sanctuary of the late 9th century BCE. The article suggests a novel interpretation for the inscriptions, and in this light speculates that they were inscribed to memorialize the contributions made by five towns and a tribe in an effort to help maintain the recently restored Moabite sanctuary after a short period of abandonment.

Keywords: Khirbet 'Ataruz, Sanctuary, Altar, Moabite inscriptions, Goshen, Ṣeret.

This article discusses the sanctuary unearthed in the Moabite city of Ataroth, elaborating it in two parts. The first part examines briefly the double turn in the history of the sanctuary, from Moabite to Israelite and later from Israelite to Moabite, highlighting the significance of the turn of rule for the temple and its patron god. The second part considers in great detail two unique Moabite inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary of Stratum 7, elucidates their text and meaning and clarifies their implication for the history of the cultic site.

The replacement of authority and deity in the history of Ataroth's sanctuary

Khirbet Ataruz (biblical Ataroth) is situated on the ridge of Jabal Ḥamidah, south of Wādi Zarqa Maʿin in central Jordan (Figure 1). After a meticulous survey of Khirbet Ataruz's surrounding region, excavations at the site began in 2000, and since then numerous additional excavation seasons have been conducted there.[1]

The most remarkable findings of the excavations are the series of temples unearthed in Fields A and E located in the elevated centre of the site. The earliest sanctuary was uncovered in Stratum 10 and comprised a single rectangular long room measuring about 12 × 5 meters (Ji 2011: 563–564; *Id.* 2012: 204–205). The sanctuary includes an offering platform, a shrine with a cella and a pedestal-like installation. As the pottery that belongs to this stage was defined as Early Iron IIA, the sanctuary should be dated to about the second half of the tenth–early ninth centuries BC.[2] The sanctuary was built by a local Moabite ruler before the Omrides occupied the region and took possession of the site.

In the next stage (Strata 9–8), the temple was greatly expanded to the north, south and west of the original sanctuary. The new sanctuary was built on top of the early one, and rooms were constructed on all its sides, as were two altars, a room with a hearth, and a high place with internal courtyards surrounding it.[3] At this stage, the temple reached its zenith and covered most of the elevated area at the centre of the site. A defense wall that surrounded Khirbet Ataruz was also constructed in an effort to protect the city, alongside its temple, garrison and inhabitants (Ji 2011: 570).

The excavator dated Strata 9–8 to the "early-mid Iron IIA" (Ji 2011: 564; *Id.* 2012: 206). Since he dated the next stages (Strata 7–6) to the post-Omride period, a date supported by both the analysis of the pottery and radio-carbon measures, Strata 9–8 must be dated to the time of the Omrides' occupation of Ataroth (Ji 2018: 180–193). The great expansion of the sanctuary should be attributed to the Omrides who, like many other conquerors in the history of the world, used the cult as an instrument to secure their hold of the conquered region. The growth of Ataroth's cult place might be compared to the operations of Hazael, King of Aram Damascus, at Tel Dan after he conquered the upper Galilee. In an effort to increase his hold on the occupied territory, the Aramaean king constructed a cult site at Dan (Stratum IVA) and probably erected his victory stele therein.[4]

[1] For the excavations of the site, see Ji 2011, 2012 and 2018; Ji and Bates 2014 and 2017.

[2] For a recent updated set of dates for the Iron IIA–IIB, see Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2006; Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2006, 2009 and 2010; Lee, Bronk Ramsey and Mazar 2013; Kleiman 2018; Finkelstein and Kleiman 2019.

[3] For details, see Ji 2011: 564–570 and 2012: 206–210.

[4] For the archaeological data of Hazael's conquest of Dan and the construction of the temple, see Biran 1994: 159–214; Sharon and Zarzecki-Peleg 2006: 153–155; Arie 2008; Ilan 2019; Kleiman 2019: 274–280.

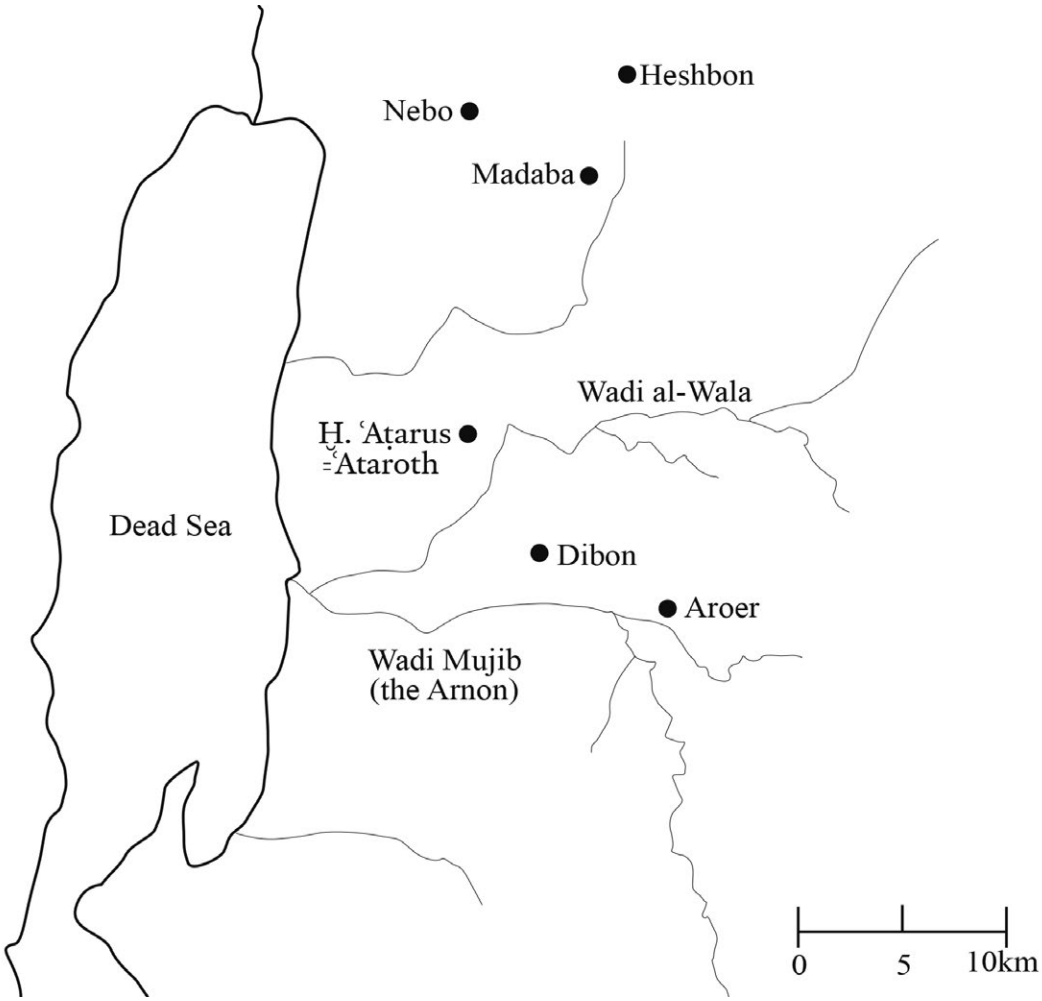

Figure 1. Localization of Khirbet Ataruz.

Among the many cult objects uncovered in the Strata 9–8 temple[5] was a five kg terracotta statue of a bull, 36 cm long, 16.5 cm wide and 38.5 cm tall (Ji 2011: 569–570; *Id.* 2012: 211 and tab. 46). As Ji observed, the bull statue was probably placed on a platform within the main sanctuary. In addition, a storage jar with seven bull heads and one ibex/gazelle head fashioned in high relief surrounding the jar's neck, was discovered in front of a standing stone (Ji 2012: 211 and tab. 44B–45). The discovery of a bull's statue and bull's relief on the neck of a jar in the Omride temple of Ataroth corresponds well with the biblical story of the erection of golden calves in the royal Israelite temples of Bethel and Dan. Although the main statue of God in the temple of Ataroth must have been made of precious metals, the large terracotta statue of a bull must also have represented the god in his temple. The אראל דודה (possibly "the altar hearth of its [Ataroth's] patron-god")[6] that Mesha captured at Ataroth probably stood in the Stratum 8 temple, and was carried as major booty to the temple of Chemosh in the town of Kerioth.[7]

Mesha's capture of Ataroth brought about the immediate decline of the temple. Yet, cultic activity continued on a limited scale at the sacred site, possibly after a short period of abandonment in Strata 7–6 (Ji 2011: 570–573; *Id.* 2018: 174–202). The new sanctuary was built east of the Strata 9–8 sanctuary, above the earlier temple's eastern high place. It included a small sanctuary comprising a single room, and a square platform (Ji 2018: 176–178 and fig.6).

In his recent publication of the late sanctuary area, Ji described the three sequential stages of its history (which he dubbed "field phases E6–E4"). Field phases E6–

[5] Ji (2012: 210) mentioned "hundreds of cultic objects" unearthed at Khirbet 'Ataruz. These findings include standing stones, a terracotta incense altar, a cup and saucer and many other small cultic artifacts (Ji 2012: 212–217).

[6] For this interpretation, see Beeston 1985: 145; Lemaire 2022: 21 line 12, 27; cf. Na'aman 2017: 87–88.

[7] For lines 12–13 of Mesha's inscription, see Jackson and Dearman 1989: 94; Jackson 1989: 98, 112–113; Mattingly 1989: 236–237; Lemaire 2022: 22.

E5 mark the sacred place's two earlier stages, which are parallel to Strata 9–8 of the earlier excavation reports; and field phase E4 marks the sanctuary's last stage (Ji 2018: 174–178). Ji described in detail the architecture of this stage (2018: 193–199), the pottery unearthed (2018: 180–193) and some artifacts (2018: 199–202). He further observed that the radio-carbon dating, extracted from charred wood taken from the surface of the fireplace, is ca. 842–801 BCE (2018: 193). As such, he concluded that field phase E4 should be dated to the time after Mesha conquered the city and settled there the former inhabitants of the towns Sharon and Maḥarat (2018: 202–204).

The most remarkable find from the sanctuary of phase E4 is an inscribed incense altar. The interpretation of the two inscriptions incised on the altar and their cultural significance are discussed in the next part of this article. But one final historical-archaeological comment is in order before turning from the sanctuary to its inscriptions.

The Ataroth temple presents an example of a cult place erected at a site that shifted ownership between two neighbouring kingdoms. In the early stage, the place and its sanctuary were Moabite. Then the Omrides conquered the city, and an Israelite temple was built on top of the former Moabite sanctuary. And finally, Mesha conquered the place and a Moabite sanctuary was constructed over the Israelite temple. Naturally, the god venerated in the sanctuary was that of the present ruler's state. Hence, first Chemosh was the sanctuary's god; then YHWH was "its [Ataroth's] patron-god (דודה)"; and ultimately, the Moabite God (Chemosh) was restored to his former role. The basis for these conclusions is textual; that is, the historical information gained from the Mesha inscription and the Bible. The case of Ataroth might form a model for Tel Dan, where the local sanctuary also changed hands. Originally, it was built by Hazael, King of Damascus (Stratum IVA); and in the next stage (Stratum III) it was built by a King of Israel (either Joash or Jeroboam II).[8] There is no text explicitly describing the shift of ownership and national god at Dan. This transition is merely a logical conclusion drawn from the combination of the historical and archaeological data. Yet the temple of Ataroth supplies an illuminating example of the shift of the political government in a place, and the consequent replacement of the temple's god with another, although the location of the sacred place did not change, and it maintained its sacred status throughout the course of time.[9]

[8] For the stratigraphy of Dan's temple, see Ilan 2019: 122–128; Kleiman 2019: 274–280.

[9] This discussion raises the question of which god was venerated in the sacred place of Dan after the Assyrians conquered the place in 733/32 BCE.

The inscriptions on the altar

An inscribed cylindrical stone altar (Figure 2) that carried two inscriptions was discovered in 2010 in the field phase E4 sanctuary at Khirbet Ataruz.[10] The altar is ca. 50 cm tall and 18.5 cm in diameter, and the inscriptions were secondarily engraved on its surface. Although discovered in 2010, the inscriptions were published eight years later in a paper authored by Adam Bean, Christopher Rollston, Kyle McCarter and Stefan Wimmer (2018). This eight-year lapse between discovery and publication is not coincidental; the inscriptions are difficult to decipher due to the non-professional execution of the script and, in particular, since the text includes many unknown hieratic signs, abbreviations and obscure words. In fact, on many occasions the publishers themselves hesitated concerning the correctness of their interpretation and presented it as tentative. No wonder that since its publication, only a single article sought to further advance the understanding of these difficult texts (Galil 2021).

In what follows, I first present the publishers' transcription of each text and their translation, and then propose my suggested translation and interpretation of the two texts. I firstly discuss Inscription A, which was the first inscribed on the altar (Bean *et al.* 2018: 211b, 214b–215a), and then Inscription B, which is the longer and more complicated one. Inscription A was written horizontally, whereas Inscription B was oriented vertically and proceeds from bottom to top of the altar (see photographs and drawings in Bean *et al.* 2018: 213, 217). As the publishers observed, the two inscriptions were written by different hands at different times (Bean *et al.* 2018: 211b). Fortunately, the authors published many excellent photos and drawings of the inscriptions, which is of great help to all scholars who would work on these difficult texts.

Inscription A

Bean *et al.* (2018: 212) transcribed the text as follows:

1. b 8 šl n
2. wzh 2 šl n
3. bʾz kl . 10

After a detailed discussion, they translated the text as follows (2018: 216):

1. For/with 8 shekels of bronze
2. And this: 2 shekels of bronze
3. Total plunder 10

[10] For the find-spot of the inscribed altar, see Ji 2018: 179, fig.6.

Interpretation and translation

I agree with Bean and his colleagues that the numbers in Inscription A (Figure 3) refer to shekels. Galil (2021: 32–33), however, interpreted the letter *beth* (ב) that appears in lines 1 and 3 as a *bath*-measure, and posited that line 2, where this letter is absent, also referred to the *bath* measure. In this light, he posited that the total of the two contributions in line 3 amount to ten *bath*-measures. However, the letter ב that designates the *bath*-measure in Hebrew epigraphy is always accompanied by an oblique line (/), which marks that this is an abbreviated form [בַּ(ת)] (see the table in Wimmer 2008: 252). This "*Glossenkeil*" appears once in an inscription incised on a jar from Lachish (Ussishkin 1978: 85–88) and eleven times in the Arad ostraca (letters 1–4, 7–11, 61 and 79).[11] In contrast, no "*Glossenkeil*" accompanies the *beth* in Inscription A.

The key to Inscription A's text appears in line 2. The first part of this line is rendered *wzh* 2, which I suggest reading as: "and gold two (shekels)". The letters *zh* are an abbreviated form of זָהָב, "gold". In accord with this interpretation, the letter *b* in lines 1 and 3 are an abbreviation of another metal, whose weight according to line 1 was eight shekels. It might be either an abbreviation of בַּרְזֶל, "iron", used for producing tools, or בְּדִיל, "tin", used for the manufacture of bronze. In light of this interpretation, line 3 (*b z kl* 10) should be translated, "iron/tin and gold – total (*kl*) ten (shekels)".

Bean *et al.* (2018: 212–214) interpreted *šl* in lines 1 and 2 as an abbreviation of shekels, and the *n* as an abbreviation of נחשת, "copper". Galil (2021: 33) rendered it *šln* and interpreted it as a personal name, Shilan. He compared the name to that of biblical Shelah, a name that appears several times in the Bible (Gen 38: 5, 11, 14; 46:12; Num 26:20; 1 Chr 2:3; 9:5), and to some Aramaic personal names, all of which are derived from the verb *š'l*, "to inquire". I accept Galil's rendering of the name, but suggest that *šln* is the name of a place, Shilon, a toponym that – like biblical Shiloh – is derived from the verb *š'l*[12] plus the suffix *–ōn*. The reason for preferring a place name over a personal name will be apparent from the discussion of Inscription B.

In sum, I suggest translating Inscription A as follows: "iron/tin eight (shekels) (from) Shilon; and gold two (shekels) (from) Shilon. Altogether Iron/tin and gold – ten (shekels)."

Inscription B

Bean *et al.* (2018: 217) transcribed Inscription B (Figure 2) as follows:

1. 4 60 mn ʿbrn . ?
2. w 4,000 grn . pšn . w . yṭš . b gdl
3. mn qr . ḥṣdt . z. swt
4. qn . ʿdmh . ?

After a detailed discussion of the text, they suggested the following tentative translation (2018: 229):

1. 4 + 60 from the Hebrews?
2. And 4,000 foreign men were scattered, and abandoned in great number.
3. From the desolate city ... which ... a burnt offering/incense altar
4. Acquired/acquiring? land ...

Interpretation and translation

The translation of Bean *et al.* is awkward and makes poor sense. Shortly after its publication, Zadok (2020) suggested interpreting *qn* in line 4 in the sense of "family, clan", and translated this line "the family/clan of *ʿdmh /qdmh*". He further observed that *qr* mentioned in line 3 means "town, settlement", and posited that both the town and the family/clan refer to the provenance of the contributions to the temple of Ataroth.

Galil offered some additional new readings. Among them: (a) In line 1, he read "from *ʿbrn*", meaning, a contribution delivered from a place called ʿEbron (2021: 32, 35); (b) in line 3, he suggested interpreting *swt* in the sense of "garment" (2021: 32, 38); and (c) in line 4, he preferred a rendering of *qdmh* over the rendering *ʿdmh* (2021: 38–39). The following discussion evaluates these and other suggestions he proposed.

I open the discussion with a preliminary comment. It seems to me that six Hieratic signs appear in the inscription, but only two of them – one at the beginning of the text and the second in the middle of line 3 – can reasonably be interpreted. The other four – those that are written at the end of line 1, at the beginning and middle of line 2 and at the end of line 4 – remain unclear. Theoretically, they might be either numbers, symbols or abbreviations of certain artifacts. Hence, in the following discussion I mark these non-deciphered numbers/signs/abbreviations by Greek letters running from α to δ.

[11] For the drawings of the Arad ostraca, see Aharoni 1981: *passim*. The key to the interpretation of the oblique sign is in ostracon No 3 (line 2), where the scribe erroneously marked the number (3) before the "*Glossenkeil*". The conclusion that the oblique sign is a "*Glossenkeil*" contrasts the suggestion of Naveh (1992: 52–54) that it marks a number (1) and that – although the *hin*-measure does not appear in the text – the following number represents the number of *hin*-measures. In his edition, Aḥituv (2008: 94) followed Naveh and consistently rendered the oblique line as the number 1 and the next numbers as *hin*-measures.

[12] For the place name שִׁלֹה (*Šîlō*) as a *qitl* formation of the root *š'l* plus a suffix *-ō*, see Zadok 1977: 267 and 1980/81: 109.

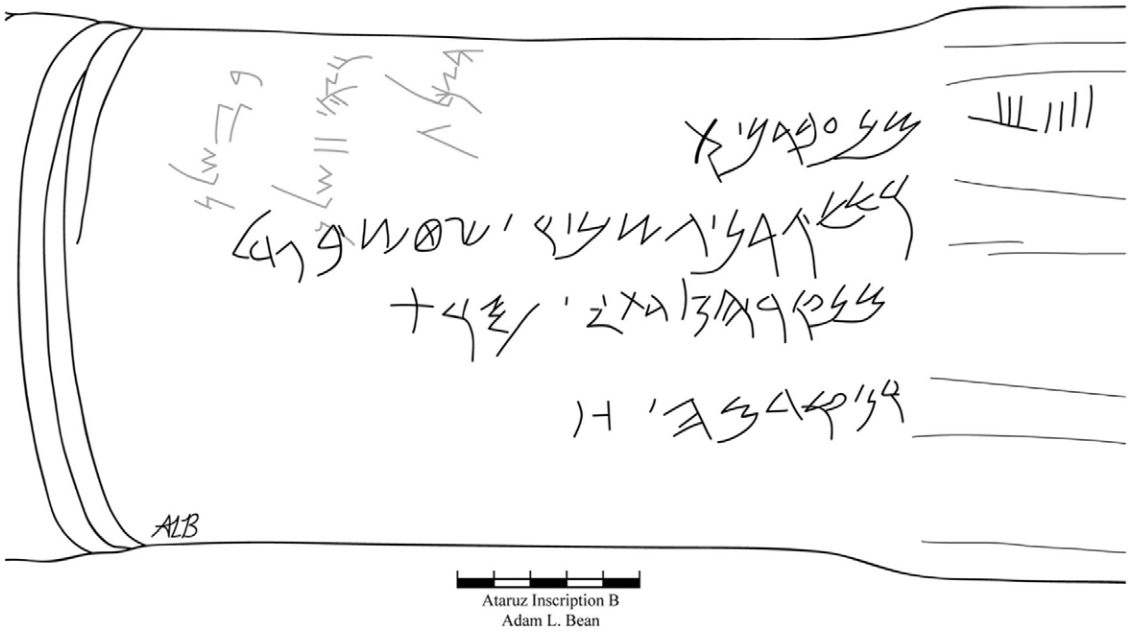

Figure 2. The altar with inscriptions (after Bean *et al.* 2018: fig. 9).

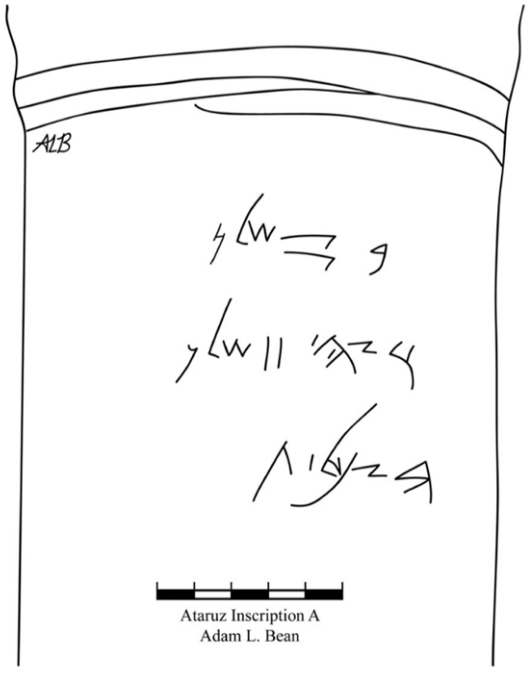

Figure 3. Inscription A (after Bean *et al.* 2018: fig. 3).

Even a quick glance at the inscription indicates that the Hieratic numbers appearing on the right side of line 1 are placed outside the inscription's four lines. Bean *et al.* (2018: 217–216) rendered them 60+4 and included them in line 1. However, the number 64 probably marks the grand total and does not belong to line 1. In fact, the contribution of ten shekels of tin/iron and gold delivered from a single place (Shilon), according to Inscription A, accords well with the contribution of 64 shekels delivered from five places (see below), according to Inscription B. Thus, the comparison of the two inscriptions supports the assumption that the number 64 is indeed the summing up of the contributions whose deliverances are registered in Inscription B.

To introduce my discussion, I posit that Inscription B relates the contributions of four places ('Ebron, Goren-goshen, Qir-haṣṣereth and Adamah/Kedmah) and possibly a tribe (the tribe[??] of *pdl*). Although the names of two of these towns ('Ebron and Adamah/Kedmah) are identical to place names mentioned in the biblical text, the two Moabite towns can hardly be identified with them. The exact location of the biblical towns of 'Ebron and Adamah/Kedmah is unknown, but they are probably located far away from Ataroth. In contrast, the four Moabite towns and tribe that contributed to the sanctuary of Ataroth could not have been located far away from the latter town. This inference is indicated by the relatively modest contributions of the four towns and tribe, which demonstrates that they were probably small Moabite places whose names were not memorialized in the biblical text.[13] In fact, Sharon and Maharat, the towns from where Mesha transferred the new settlers of Ataroth after he conquered the city, are also absent from the biblical text.[14]

[13] I consider unlikely Galil's identification of biblical 'Ebron and Kedmah, both located far away from Ataroth, with the towns mentioned in Inscription B (2021: 35, 38b–39a), as well as his suggestion that the towns mentioned in Inscription B are arranged in geographical order from north to south (2021: 32).

[14] For lines 13–14 of Mesha's inscription, see Jackson and Dearman

The following is a detailed discussion of the text of lines 1–4:

Line 1: "From ʿEbron α". A place called ʿEbron is mentioned in the account of the wandering in the desert (Num 33:34–35) and in the towns list of Asher (Josh 19:28). The nature of ʿEbron's contribution remains unknown.

Line 2a: "And β (from) Goren-goshen", a place-name composed of two nouns. Toponyms compounded with *gōren* ("threshing floor") are known from the Bible (Goren ha-atad [Gen 50:10–11]; Goren-nachon [2 Sam 6:6]; and Goren-chidon [1 Chr 13:9]). Goren is also mentioned in the list of Negev settlements in the topographical list of Shishak (No 127 – *grn*; see Aḥituv 1984: 104).

The Land of Goshen (*gōšen*) is mentioned frequently in the Exodus story as designation of the region in Egypt where the Israelites settled. Goshen is also mentioned as a place-name in the highlands of Judah (Josh 15:51) and twice as a district's name. The latter two references read as follows: (a) Josh 10:41: "And Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and the whole Land of Goshen as far as Gibeon"; and (b) Josh 11:16: "So Joshua took this whole land, the hill country, and the whole Negeb, and the whole land of Goshen, and the Shephelah, and the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel and its lowland." In my opinion, in all these references *gōšen* denotes a wide, flat land.[15] In the Exodus story, it denotes a wide region in the eastern Egyptian Delta. In Josh 10:41 it denotes the coastal region between Gaza and northward, up to Gibeon; that is, the coastal region that the Hellenistic sources called Pharalia.[16] The exact location of the Judahite town of Goshen is unknown, but tentatively, it must be sought in an open wide valley located in the southern highlands of Judah.[17] Thus, Goren-goshen (verbally, "the threshing floor of the wide flat land") is a town located in a plain region somewhere not far away from Ataroth. The nature of its contribution is unknown.

Line 2b: The transcription of the text is: *w* γ *ṭ š b p*[18] *d l*, "and γ (from) *ṭšb-pdl*". Assuming that *ṭšb-pdl* is a place name, the meaning of the name is incomprehensible. As the inscription was written by a provincial scribe[19], I tentatively suggest that the scribe mistakenly metathesized the letters, and instead of *šbṭ pdl* ("the tribe of *pdl*") erroneously rendered them *ṭšb-pdl*. According to this hypothesis, the contribution was delivered by a tribe whose location was in the region of Ataroth. Needless to say, my suggestion is no more than a guess and cannot be verified.

Line 3: "*mn qr-ḥṣrt 5 swt*". The town *qr-ḥṣrt* (Qir-haṣṣereth) is a compound name of *qīr* ("town, settlement") and *ṣrt*.[20] The noun *qīr* in the sense of "town" is known from the Mesha inscription (lines 11–12, 24, 29),[21] and several Moabite toponyms compounded with *qīr* are mentioned in the Bible (Kir-haresheth [2 Kgs 3:25; Isa 16:7]; Kir-Moab [Isa 15:1]; Kir-heres [Isa 16:11; Jer 48:31, 36]). As for *ṣrt*, a town called Ṣeret haš-šaḥar (Josh 13:19) is included in the town list of Reuben;[22] and the town Ṣārtan, located in the middle Jordan Valley, is mentioned twice in the history of Solomon (1 Kgs 4:12; 7:46) and a third time in the story of the crossing of the Jordan (Josh 3:16). *Ṣeret* also appears as a name of a family within the tribe of Judah (1 Chr 4:7). This name is derived either from the noun *ṣwr*, "rock, cliff", or from the verb *ṣrr* in the sense of "narrow (place)" (Wimmer 2000: 40). Thus, Qir-haṣ-ṣereth (verbally, "the town of the cliff/narrow place") is a name of a town, possibly located in the region of Ataroth.

Concerning *swt*, Galil (2021: 38a) correctly observed that it means "a garment" and presented several Hebrew (Gen 49:11; Exod 21:10) and Aramaic references that mention this noun. Assuming that the Hieratic sign designates the number 5, this is the number of prestigious priestly(?) garments that the inhabitants of Qir-haṣ-Ṣereth contributed to the sanctuary.

Line 4: "and from (*w<m>n*) '/qdmh δ". At the beginning of the line, the scribe erroneously omitted the letter *mem* of the preposition מן (from"). The toponym in line 4 might be read either Adamah (*'dmh*) or Kedmah (*qdmh*). As the location of this place is unknown, restoration of both names is equally likely. Therefore, I leave both alternative readings and avoid a decision on its accurate rendering.

In sum, I suggest that we translate Inscription B as follows:

64 (shekels)
1. From ʿEbron α.
2. And β (from) Goren-goshen; and γ (from) the tribe[??] of *pdl*.
3. From Qir-haṣ-ṣereth 5 garments.
4. And <fr>om Adamah/Kedmah δ.

1989: 94; Jackson 1989: 98; Lemaire 2022: 22.

[15] Albright (1957: 242 n. 58) posited that the original meaning of Goshen "seems to have been 'mound (of earth)', Heb. *gûš*."

[16] Note that the coastal region (the Land of Goshen) is the only district that is missing from the list of conquered southern regions enumerated in Josh 10:40–41 and 11:16.

[17] For a different interpretation of biblical Goshen, see Noth 1935: 35–43; Levin 2003, with earlier literature.

[18] Bean *et al.* (2018: 217, 220–221) read it *gimel*. However, the shape of the letter is closer to *pe* than *gimel*.

[19] Galil (2021: 44b) observed the provincial nature of the inscription. Also note the omission of the *mem* in the beginning of line 4 (*w<m>n*).

[20] The lower part of the *resh* is damaged. Bean *et al.* (2018: 217) rendered it *dalet*.

[21] See Jackson and Dearman 1989: 94–95; Jackson 1989: 111.

[22] For the identification of the place, see Kallai 1986: 441; Wimmer 2000; Knauf 2001.

What might have been the occasion on which the inscriptions were written on the cylindrical stone altar? This question cannot be answered with certainty. A reasonable assumption is that the contributions of the five towns and the tribe were made in an effort to support the cult place when the Moabites restored the sanctuary and dedicated it. The two inscriptions might have been incised to commemorate these towns' generous contributions, which helped maintain the recently restored Moabite sanctuary after an unknown period of abandonment.

This article is dedicated to Prof. Tallay Ornan, a long-time colleague and friend. Tallay's unique name, that of Baʿal's daughter and a Goddess of Dew (Wiggins 2003: 93–94), may have directed her career as a kind of nomen-omen. Accordingly, Tallay has dedicated her research to the study of the ancient Near East, focusing in particular on the iconography and symbolism of the deities and the cult and culture of various Near Eastern kingdoms. Her brilliant book on the *Triumph of the Symbol* (2013) and her many important and insightful papers on different aspects of the cult and iconography of the ancient Near East and Canaan /Israel establish her as a leading scholar in the field.

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Chapter 40:
Beyond the visible.
Feeling the divine presence in ancient Mesopotamia

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It is an honour for me to dedicate this paper to a valuable colleague. Her work has always inspired me. May she find in this minor contribution a tribute and an indebted appreciation

Abstract. In the present paper, my aim is to pursue the investigation on the symbolic world Tallay Ornan as embarked on. Going beyond the visual, I will consider other sensory effects that are created in the ritual scene thanks to various elements and substances described in Akkadian epigraphic sources (2nd and 1st millennium BCE). These effects allow presenting and making present the divine. They participate in establishing a non-verbal communication between human and divine entities. Divine bodies may be described according to sensory analogies. The officiant may also target one sense (smell, taste, hearing, for instance) of the divine or demonic entity, so as to attract it or, on the contrary, to chase it away. Assyrian and Babylonian scholars had at their disposal various media to shape the divine body, and were not limited to the visual realm.

Keywords: Mesopotamia, ritual, demon, sensation, emotion, smell, analogy, divine, matter.

Introduction

As a philologist and historian of the senses, I have always looked at the richness of the iconographic representations of ancient Mesopotamia with awe: bas-reliefs, cylinder seals, figurines, etc.: these are exceptional testimonies of concepts and symbols related to the divine representations of the ancient and distant civilizations that once occupied the lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Tallay Ornan's book *The Triumph of the Symbols* (2005) illustrates the scope of the figurative repertoire that existed in Mesopotamia during the 2nd and the 1st millennia BCE. Ornan showed how Ancient Near Eastern societies gave visible and figurative forms to non-human entities, their powers and their divine nature. In the process, she noted that anthropomorphism was not the only way to give them a visual form. Take the example of the Sun-god Šamaš : atop the *Code* of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (18th century BCE)[1], the Sun-god is represented with anthropomorphic traits; he is seated, wearing a horned crown, and flames are spreading out from his shoulders. On the Kassite *kudurrus,* as well as on 1st millennium artefacts – such as the kudurru of Meli-shipak,[2] or the *Sun-god Tablet* (Woods 2004)[3] – the Sun-god is depicted as a disc with flames. A deity could indeed be depicted in different ways. Across the centuries, the repertory of forms and media expanded and diversified, especially in the 1st millennium BCE. Tallay Ornan (2005) links the Biblical prohibition against images to that specific context wherein anthropomorphism was no longer the only way to give form to non-human entities. In this paper, my aim is to expand on Orman's study of the non-anthropomorphic representation of Mesopotamian deities in the 1st millennium BCE. I will focus on the epigraphic sources, especially those describing divine entities involved in a ritual scene. Text and image are two complementary media – neither identical nor contradictory:

> "Although the written and pictorial expressions were products of the same civilization, they did not necessarily have the same referent or convey the same message. It is sometimes extremely difficult to correlate the two modes of expression-as if visual and written modes developed along parallel, but not identical,

[1] The english version of this chapter received support from the Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Homme d'Alsace (MISHA) and the Excellence Initiative of the University of Strasbourg.
Louvre Museum, Sb 8; see pictures https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010174436 (last consulted March 2024).

[2] Louvre Museum, Sb 22; AS 6068; see pictures https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010174452 (last consulted March 2024).

[3] British Museum, BM 91000; see pictures https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1881-0428-34-a (last consulted March 2024).

> venues in Mesopotamia and other areas of the ancient Near East. The code represented by an ancient picture must often, then, be deciphered according to its own rules." (Ornan 2005: 11.)[4]

The philological data may complement our general understanding of the divine representation in Ancient Mesopotamia, and its progressive detachment from the anthropomorphic scheme. The Akkadian term *ṣalmu* (Sumerian alam/alan) is frequently translated as "statue" but its semantic field is much wider than that: it designates a royal statue, a living entity prepared for ritual purposes (such as the sacrificial sheep, the royal substitute in the *šar pūḫi* ritual (Verderame 2013), but also the officiant when he is identified with the god Asalluhi -Marduk in exorcistic rituals). The term *ṣalmu* can also refer to a two-dimensional drawing.[5] The uses of the term *ṣalmu* highlight the variety of the visual and physical materials that can be created and used for *presencing* (=making present) and *representing* the divine power.[6] The *ṣalmu*-form is much more than a copy of the supra-human entity; it is one of its manifestations, and it makes its powers tangible (Taussig 1993). Not all media are limited to the visual or iconographic realms. They may also include other sensory channels. To illustrate that point, I will focus on the ritual scene and the sensory effects created by the substances, the raw material, and the objects handled by the officiants during the ritual procedure. These sensible effects are not only visual by nature; they can also be sonorous, olfactive, tactile, gustatory, mobile, and so on. They all contribute to the embodiment of the divine entity and its presence in the ritual scene. They are integrated into the symbolic language that makes the divine powers tangible. My aim here is to pursue the investigation on the symbolic world by going beyond the visual and considering the other sensory effects that shaped and helped representing the divine for the human beings experiencing and feeling its presence.

Over the past three decades, anthropologists and historians of the senses have shown that bodily perception is where self and culture are intertwined. Our ancient sources do not give us access to the intimate and individual experience, but to the discourses, the symbols, the codes and cultural values associated with sensory experiences.[7] With specific words, metaphors or comparisons, the ancient vocabulary may give us access to the symbolic meanings and values attributed to sensory phenomena in ancient Mesopotamia (Rendu Loisel 2020). In the ritual procedure, hearing a musical instrument, or smelling the sweet fragrance of a burning vegetal product for instance, may be used in a symbolic way; they convey specific meanings which are addressed to both the human and the divine entities who are present in the specific moment of the ritual. The sensory ritual experience is not only intended for the human participants. They are part of a non-verbal communication with goddesses, gods, and other supra-human entities who are supposed to experience and feel them. That means that these entities are embodied, whatever the forms they take. Sensory effects bear cultural and symbolic values and are intentionally produced to convoke the presence of a divine entity, or, at least, of one of its aspects or powers. Beyond the visual realm, a perceptible mental "image" of the divine is created. Non-visual effects contribute to the non-anthropomorphic representation of the divine entities in ancient Mesopotamia, especially in the 1st-millennium sources.

To illustrate this sensory approach, I will focus on the ritual scene, and organize my paper in two parts. In the first part, I will explore the sensory hybridism of the divine representation according to the *God Description Texts*: the sensory properties of the objects and substances present in the ritual scene shape and give an "image" of the supra-human entity. In the second part, I will explore exorcistic and anti-witchcraft procedures of the 1st millennium BCE. These ritual scenes are particularly relevant to the topic explored here in that procedures were not conducted in the temple, around or near the cult statue, but in the house of the patient, where a divine representation was needed for the specific moment of the ritual procedure.

The God Description Texts and the sensory (re)presentation of the divine

Sensorial hybridity and divine entities in Mesopotamia

In the *Triumph of the Symbol*, Tallay Ornan gathered a considerable number of Sumero-Akkadian divine figurations for the 2nd and the 1st millennia BCE. Anthropomorphism was the most common and

[4] See also "The divergence between text and visual representation in Mesopotamia has, of course, a deeper reason, bound to the basic difference between word and picture. As two separate vehicles of communication the written and visual modes differ in the very nature of their transmission and in the ways they are grasped by their audience: reader, listener and beholder. Whereas the text, for example, is a time-sequential mode of expression, the picture is a simultaneously-event means of recording." As expressed by Suter: "Before and after being 'sent' through the channel, the message is transferred from one system of symbols to another. This encoding is vital, and entails a mam difference between written and pictorial expressions." Indeed, the picture sometimes has to modify the structure, details and emphasis of the verbal theme in order to transmit a similar message" (Ornan 2005: 11–12).

[5] For all these examples, see the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, CAD Ṣ (1962), "*ṣalmu*": 78–85. See also Bahrani 2003; Belting 2004; Glassner 2016.

[6] For the distinction between *presencing* (make present) and *representing* (give a form) see Gumbrecht 2004, and the introduction in Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik 2015.

[7] Stoller 1989; Howes 2003; Avrahami 2012; Hamilakis 2013; Hawthorn and Rendu Loisel 2019; Neumann and Thomasson 2021.

frequent form of representation, but beside the great gods, minor deities or entities belonging to the *Mischwesen* and *Monstruous* categories (see Wiggermann 2011; Sonik 2013; Bácskay 2013) were not necessarily depicted with a human body. In Ancient Mesopotamia, there was a Door-god, a Brick-god, a Boat-god and a Kettledrum-god, for instance (Selz 1997; Linssen 2004; Woods 2005; Porter 2009; Cavigneaux 2017). Musical instruments or objects playing an important role in the cult could be the subject of the *mīš pî* ritual, according to the cuneiform sources of the 1st millennium BCE. This complex ritual makes the divine energy enter the statue/manufactured objects in which the divine power is supposed to dwell (Walker and Dick 2001; Gabbay 2015; Rendu Loisel 2016: 207–213; Gabbay 2018). Prayers and hymns could also be addressed to buildings, as shown by the Sumerian *Temple Hymns* attributed to the daughter of Sargon Enheduanna (Westenholz 1989; Meador 2000; Glassner 2009; Löhnert 2013; Rendu Loisel 2020b) or the Neo-Assyrian hymns to the cities of Arbela, Uruk and Aššur.[8] This practice may have had a long history, as exemplified by evidence of representations of a semi-anthropomorphic Boat-god on third millennium glyptic objects (Woods 2005: 18–19). In her study of mountains, trees, springs, and rivers in Mesopotamian cosmology, Anna Perdibon demonstrates that divine attributes could be given to a range of natural entities. Trees were considered sacred animate beings; during the creation of a staff in a *kiškanû*-tree, the officiant summons the very first cosmic divine *kiškanû* -tree who grew up in the Abzu, the divine residence of the great god Enki.[9]

Besides this variety of forms, Ancient Near Eastern human societies struggled to address the bodily nature of non-human entities. These entities are referred to as mixed creatures (*Mischwesen*, and *Zwischenwesen*).[10] Invisible, powerful, and tangibly acting on the human world through various media, gods, goddesses and all the secondary agents (such as demons and monsters) are characterized by hybridity; this process illustrates all their aspects and powers. In iconography, Tallay Ornan gives numerous examples for the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE in Mesopotamia and the Levant.[11] Hybrid entities such as human-headed bulls are also found in abundance in Sumerian third-millennium iconography.[12] Seals, figurines, statues (unfortunately less numerous than the other artefacts) give concrete examples of how hybridism helped conceiving and conceptualizing the complexity of the supra-human world and of its members. Frans Wiggermann has shown how various typologies of hybrids relate to different categories of divine beings and entities which are in close connection with the great gods (gods, semi-gods, demons, spirits, monsters, etc.) (Wiggermann 1992; 1993; 2007; 2011). One may find descriptions of these entities in cuneiform tablets. Known from tablets of the middle-Babylonian period (mid-2nd millennium BCE), the *Göttertypentext* contains descriptions of twenty-seven statues of gods, goddesses, or demons.[13] Each paragraph is devoted to one entity. Following a top-to-toe order, it describes the entity's physical members, organs and general behavior, ending with its name. Hybridism gives a supra-human form to invisible powers; it makes the deity's powers concrete, visible, and tangible. For instance, the Anxiety-demon (*Niziqtu)* is described as follows:

> "The head wears a headdress and ox horns. He wears ox ears. The hair is a loose hair falling on the heels. The face is that of a woman. His hands are those of a man. He has wings, and his hands are stretched over his wings. The naked body is that of a woman. He stands on his toes (lit. "His feet stand in/for the *huppu*"). His name is Anxiety." (MIO I 80ff, vi l.13–23).[14]

This corporal hybridity helps convey the idea that the divine is too complex to be grasped by the human eyes and mind. The human and the natural worlds are both fruitful sources of inspiration to create new syncretic and polymorphous entities. The same principle is at work in the *Vision of the Netherworld* from the Neo-Assyrian period: during a dream, the protagonist goes down to the Netherworld and encounters several hybrid demons (SAA III 32 VAT 1005, see Livingstone 1992; Ataç 2004; Foster 2005: 832–839).

The hybridity is not exclusively of a visual nature; it is also involved in the *presencing* process of the divine

[8] Published in Livingstone 1992: nos. 1, 8–10.

[9] Perdibon 2019: 156–159 in particular. See the incantation in the *Utukkū Lemnūtu* series, tablet XIII, l.95–103 in Geller 2016: 460–463. However, the examples above pertain mostly to minor or secondary deities, and not the great gods of the Mesopotamian pantheon (such as Ištar, Ea, Sīn, Šamaš, and so on). As Tallay Ornan has pointed out, from the mid-second millennium, the great gods started to be represented symbolically, whereas secondary deities were depicted with anthropomorphic traits (Ornan 2005: 14).

[10] See the definition in Bácskay 2013: 2: "The Mesopotamians blamed demons as one of the main causes of all misfortunes and sufferings. Modern scholarly literature describes demons as mixed creatures (*Mischwesen*) and intermediary creatures (*Zwischenwesen*). The first term refers to the iconography which represents demons as a combination of different animal parts, like the claws of an eagle and the head of a beast. The second term refers to the transitional state of demons that are found in the intermediate sphere between divine and human existence."

[11] See also Sass and Uehlinger 1993; Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Ornan 2005; Angelini 2021.

[12] See the example from Ebla in gold, steatite, and wood (TM 76.G.850, Early Bronze Age, Mardikh IIb, National Museum in Aleppo, Syria in Aruz 2003: 172–173.

[13] As indicated in the colophon with the Akkadian term *ṣalmu* (ALAM). For the bibliographical references, see Köcher 1953: 57–58; Wiggermann 1993: 223; Rendu Loisel 2011. For the Hittite world, see Rost 1963.

[14] SAG.DU *ku-ub-šu* SI.MEŠ GU_4 GAR-*in* / $GEŠTU_2$ GU_4 GAR-*in* / šar-*tum* sig_2-*ba-ru-u*$_2$ / *ana* $ša_2$-*šal-li-šu* ŠUB-*at* / *pa-nu* SAL-tu_4 / *rit-ta*-šu LU_2 / *kap-pi* GAR-*ma rit-ta-*$ša_2$ / *ina* UGU *kap-pi-*$ša_2$ *tar-ṣa* / *pag-ru me-re-nu* SAL-tu_4 / GIR_3.II.BI *hu-up-pa* GUB-*za* / MU.BI *ni-ziq-tum.*

entity in the ritual scene. Thanks to their sensory properties, objects, materials, and substances may be combined to make present and represent the goddess/god the officiant wants to interact with, as can be seen in the so-called *God Description Texts.*

Sensorial hybridity: The God Description Texts

The *God Description Texts* is the name given to around ten cuneiform documents of the 1st millennium BCE (from the Neo-Assyrian to the Seleucid Periods). Using the same structure, they describe the body of a divine entity by comparing each member to an element, such as an animal, a substance, a raw material, an object, etc. The association is based on the analogy principle, focusing on an obvious connection between the divine body part and the comparative element, or, on the contrary, based on a connection awkward for us. Livingstone first gathered four documents from the Neo-Assyrian archives in his study on the mystical works of the Assyrian scholars.[15] Reynolds added a new text from the British Museum and Pongratz-Leisten offered a complete list with the corresponding bibliography in her study of the imperial allegories.[16] As Pongratz-Leisten has noted, "not all of these texts contain 'body description' components." (2015: 128). I will not discuss the purposes of these compositions but rather focus on the sensory analogies used by scholars to describe the body of a divine entity in the ritual scene. The name of the goddess/god is unfortunately not preserved, except for the one concerning Anzû (KAR 307: l.1–18, Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 132–136), which I will use here as an illustration:

> "[... is his...]. Tamarisk is his topknot. ... / [...] is his [...]. The palm frond is [his] beard / [Cedar] is his [kne]es. The apple is his ankle bones. The snake is his penis. The harp/lyre is his hand. / [...] his wings. / [...] is his [...]. The cat is the blood of his heart. The partridge is a drop of his heart's blood. / [...] ... [is his ...]. The pig is his inwards. / The scorpion is his lip. The whet-stone is his tongue. The leek is the hair of his armpits. / The drum is his lower jaw. / The lion is his larger intestines. The dog is his smaller intestines. The raven is his mole. / The poplar is [his] stature. / The kettledrum is his heart. The date palm is his backbone. The reeds are his fingers. / Silver is his skull. Gold is his sperm / The thorn bush is his breast hair. The boxthorn is the hair of his groin/ The ear wax is lead/ The fruit tree is his bone. / The fish are his breasts/ The figs are his... oil is his tears. / The bulrush is his nose mucus. / The dried dates are his flesh. The aromatic... is [his] li[ps]. / [...] is the ... of his blood. The grapes are [his] eyeballs" (KAR 307: l.1–18; translation from Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 132–133).

The syntax is of great interest here. Each nominal sentence starts not with the divine body part, but with a natural element or object, which is the grammatical subject of the sentence. The intention of the text is perhaps placed on it rather than on the body parts of the supra-human entity. Most of the objects and substances play a role in cultic activities, as other ritual descriptions in cuneiform sources suggest. These *God Descriptions Texts* may then be written according to the objects, matters and substances present in cultic activities and rituals to make the divine entity present. It appears that a goddess or a god is not associated with one single object/substance, but to a compendium of various items. Were one to attempt to visualize the god or goddess described in those texts, one would picture something closer to Giuseppe Arcimboldo's 16th-century still lives[17] than to Mesopotamian cult statues or the iconography on cylinder seals. To equate one item to one body part, Assyrian scholars use analogical principles, identifying one aspect of the item that shares common features with the body part in question. The visual characteristic is frequently the key to understanding the association. To take the example of the trees and vegetal substances mentioned in the case above, various species are cited: tamarisk, palm frond, cedar, poplar, date palm, thorn bush, boxthorn, and fruit tree. The comparisons are organized in two different groups: one deals with the skeletal structure, and the other with body hair. Whereas branches and trunks may be associated with bones (or to the very nature of cultic statues made of wood plated with precious metals), vegetal parts and leaves will easily be associated with bodily hair. Similarities may also be identified on physical characteristics, as it is the case for the globular aspect of grapes, which recalls the divine eyeballs.

The association of one item with one body part has specific meanings that are sometimes hard to define when remaining on the visual level. The description does not only focus on what can be seen, as it also describes the inner parts of the divinity that are not supposed to be seen (its innards, or its larger intestines, for instance), but also convey or express the divine power. The divine body is characterized by hybridity. Far from being cooking recipes or models for craftsmen in the creation of a cultic statue, the *God Description Texts* are intellectual products of scholars who give sense to the manipulation and the presence of objects, materials

[15] Livingstone 1986: 92–111, with a new translation in the reissue of the same monograph in 1989: 93–102, texts 37–39.

[16] Reynolds 2002: 218; Rendu Loisel 2011; Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 128–139. Here I only use some excerpts from these peculiar scholarly compositions, referring to Pongratz-Leisten's study and bibliographical references.

[17] See for instance *Summer* (1563) Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

and substances during various cultic ceremonies and rituals. We do not know if all the items were present at the same time in rituals.

The analogy here goes far beyond anthropomorphism and creates a body that surpasses human understanding. Objects, materials, and substances address all the senses to make humans feel and perceive the divine power.[18] The items have specific sensory properties that are not necessarily only visual. In addition to their tactile properties, they have a gustatory dimension (for instance, foodstuffs), and, most of all, an acoustic one, especially for the musical instruments. The harp or lyre (^{giš}za$_3$-mi$_2$/ *sammû* : CAD S (1984), "*sammû*": 118–120) is associated to the hand; of course, the strings may by analogy be associated to the fingers, but we can also think of how this instrument is played and the tactile experience it involves. As for the kettledrum (^{lilis}li-lis / *lilissu* : CAD L (1973), "*lilissu*": 186–187), the acoustic analogy is obvious. This musical instrument is well documented in the ritual corpus of the 1st millennium BCE; for the Seleucid period, we have ritual instructions to restore and repair this instrument made of bull skin. When tuned, this musical instrument reproduces a divine voice (Linssen 2004: 92–99; Rendu Loisel 2016: 204–215; Gabbay 2018). In the *God Description Text* KAR 307, the kettledrum is mentioned for its acoustic quality. The sound of the kettledrum suggests the heartbeat, recalling the mythological creation of humanity in the Old-Babylonian story of the Flood.[19]

Among the *God Description Texts* at our disposal, only one preserves the name of the described entity. It is Anzû , the monstrous and hybrid bird with a lion's face. According to Pongratz-Leisten (2015: 135), the items mentioned in the description might not be explained for their cultic and ritual functions. The monstrous composite body must be considered in relation to the general mythology of the victorious god Ninurta who defeated Anzû: giving a tangible form – even a hybrid one – helps to ritually act on this entity. The geographical origins of the substances and materials illustrate the imperial allegory of hegemonic Assyrian royal power.[20]

Sensory similarities contribute to the ritual *presencing* and *representation* of an invisible entity, as if the visual form were not enough. The mythological enemy can then be wholly perceived by the participants in the procedure, as is the case in exorcistic rituals against the demoness Lamaštu, which I will now discuss.

The sensory demonic body and the ritual dynamic: The case of the Lamaštu figurines

The fight against Lamaštu: Introduction to ritual practices

Rituals against demonic entities and anti-witchcraft procedures are of great interest in our inquiry regarding the material representation and the *presencing* of an invisible entity in the ritual scene. Contrary to the cultic procedures addressed to or involving the main great goddesses and gods, these specific ritual procedures usually take place not in the temple, far from its cella – the divine residence – but rather in a contaminated place, such as the patient's house. As suggested by Schwemer and Abusch in their edition of anti-witchcraft rituals of the 1st millennium BCE, there is a practical requirement for the objects used in the ritual to figure the divine entity: they must be easily transportable, or easily reproduced, even schematically, in the contaminated place (Abusch and Schwemer 2011: 22; Rendu Loisel 2015: 223). Furthermore, the procedures are designed to act on an evil entity, whether it is the malevolent demon, or a sorceress/sorcerer, who is not visible to human eyes. The ritual gestures will give them a material form – a figurine – so that the officiant may destroy them. Creating such a concrete form is not an insignificant act, as it gives power to the entity. As we can see in the incantation series, the exorcist frequently recites the complete litany of known demons, to be sure that he will name the right one. For the figurine, the officiant must create a form that will gather all the signs and symbols for an entirely accurate identification of the demonic entity. Sensory characteristics are added to the visual ones. As in the *God Description Texts*, the figuration goes far beyond anthropomorphism, and involves a symbolism that uses all the sensory means at the officiant's disposal.

Among the numerous ritual procedures preserved in 1st-millennium cuneiform sources, those performed to fight the demoness Lamaštu were of the utmost importance, as her favourite victims were infants and pregnant women. The ritual procedures were meant to chase her away, to cure the patient, and to establish protective boundaries to prevent potential attacks. Amulets, figurines and cuneiform inscriptions illustrate the popularity of these practices in daily life throughout the Ancient Near East (Wiggermann 2000; Heessel 2002; Ornan 2006; Heessel 2011; Farber 2014).

The ritual procedures are described in prescriptive texts written by the officiants; they combine words,

[18] It is also the case in oneiric experiences, when a human sees a god/goddess or supra-human entity: see for instance Gudea's dream of Ningirsu, in cylinder A (Gudea Cyl A. v 13 – 6) (Livingstone 1986: 93; Rendu Loisel 2019: 280–283).

[19] *Atra-Hasīs* I: l.212–217 (Lambert and Millard 1969: 58–59; Livingstone 1986: 104; Wasserman 2020).

[20] "Control over the body of the defeated monster, then, implied control over the trees, plants, fruits, animals, metals, and fabricated objects represented by its body parts and, by extension, insinuated control over the territory in which they originated." (Pongratz-Leisten 2015: 136).

gestures, and actions to be performed. Assyriological studies designate these compositions by the general term "incantation." These "incantations" are all written in the second person singular and addressed to the officiant who will accomplish the ritual procedure. Walter Farber (Farber 2014) published a critical edition of the canonical series of the 1st millennium BCE. Incantations may be written on amulets, with an iconographic counterpart; these amulets were probably hung around the patient's neck (Wiggermann 2000; Heessel 2002; 2011; Farber 2014: 29–33). These amulets thus have a tactile dimension that plays an important role in the sensory memory of the ritual. The patient could touch the amulet at any time or could feel the contact of the object and its weight on their skin, a reminder that they were ritually protected against the malevolent Lamaštu. The amulets featured iconographic figurations of the ritual tools and objects, such as the lamp and all the provisions and objects given to Lamaštu for her return to the Netherworld. By seeing, touching, or feeling the amulet, the patient could remember all the sensory effects that had been produced during the procedure. They could experience it anew and feel protected once again. These canonical incantations contain several pieces of information that may be of great interest to our inquiry regarding sensory media for the representation and the *presencing* of a supra-human entity, like the Lamaštu or other entities that are supposed to help the officiant in the ritual fight. I will focus on Lamaštu's representation. She has a monstrous and hybrid appearance: she is depicted with the wide open mouth of a lion as if she were roaring; she has the legs and feet of an eagle. She is represented breastfeeding a puppy dog and a piglet. She rides on a donkey which is inside a boat sailing on the Hubur river which leads to the Netherworld.[21]

Sensory representations in the ritual procedures

When the officiant starts the ritual procedure to chase Lamaštu away, Lamaštu is already present around the victim (Stol 1993: 52–53). He needs to make her visible to human eyes and perceptible to the senses so that he can act against her. The iconographic representation is not enough. One of the most common ways to do this is to utter the seven different names of the Lamaštu (*Lamaštu series* I, Farber 20214: 144, l.1–10). These names are effective and work like incantations. The officiant has to written them all on a clay cylinder and put this inscribed object around the neck of the baby.

According to the ritual prescription, in that specific procedure, there is no iconographic representation of the demoness: no figurine, no drawing, etc. The demoness is made tangible by writing all her names on a cylinder seal made especially for the ritual. These names are powerful and effective incantations that give a concrete/tangible form to Lamaštu in the ritual scene thanks to the vocal dimension of the ritual utterance, allowing the officiant to act against her. The inscription makes the ritual action and the oral recitation eternal.

The ritual procedures against Lamaštu frequently involve the making of figurines. The ritual instructions include various sensory properties to be applied on the *magica materia* composing the figurine, as we will see in the next two rituals, which are variations of the same procedure, each time following an incantation describing the demoness.

> "you make a (figurine of) Lamaštu as a prisoner. / You arrange the layout (for the ritual). You place 12 rolls made from unsifted flour before her. / You libate well water for her. You make her hold a black dog. / You make her sit at the head of the sick person for three days. / You place a piglet's [hea]rt in her mouth, pour hot (soup) for her. / You give her a [flas]k of oil, provide her with (travel) provisions. / [Dr]y [bread] you pu[t down for her. In the morning, at noon, (and) in the e]vening / you recite the incantation to her. [On the third day, in late aftern]oon, you move her out / and b[ur]y her in the cor[ner of the wall]" (*Lamaštu Series I*, *Ritual 2a*, translation Farber 2014: 146-147).[22]

The officiant must shape a figurine representing Lamaštu: no detailed instruction is given to depict what a Lamaštu should look like. The instructions are written by experts for experts who know what a Lamaštu looks like. They share a knowledge of the visual features of this supra-human entity. Lamaštu should be shaped as a prisoner, which could indicate that Lamaštu should have her arms tied, as the iconographic representation of prisoners and enemy may suggest. The ritual instructions create a sensory experience for Lamaštu herself, an experience which is based on gustatory parameters as well as thermoception (with the hot meal), the sense of time (morning, noon, evening),[23] in an acoustic atmosphere thanks to the several recitations of the incantation by the officiant.

[21] One of the most famous examples remains the "Plaque de conjuration" held at the Louvre Museum in Paris (AO 22205) from the Neo-Assyrian period (9th–6th century BCE), see pictures of the object https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010120479 (last consultation, June 2022). See other representations in Farber 2014: 2–6.

[22] $DU_3.DU_3.BI$ *Lamaštu kīma ša bīt ṣibitti teppuš / tirṣa tatarraṣ* 12 *akal qēmi lā napî ana pāniša tašakkan / mê būri tanaqqīši kalba ṣalma tušaḫḫassi / šalāšat ūmī ina rēš marṣi tušeššebši / [lib]bi kurkizanni ana pîša tašakkan baḫra tatabbakši / [šikka]t šamni tanaddinši ṣudê tuṣaddā/ēši / [akla abla] taš[akkanši šēra muṣlāla š]imītān / minûta tamannūši [ina šalši ūmi ina qiddat ūm]i tušeṣṣēši-ma / ina tub[qi dūri t]e[qe]b[bi]rši*. See edition in Farber 2014: 73.

[23] For a study of the sense of time in the Assyrian world, see Neumann 2019.

The patient is not left behind and is also involved in a sensory ritual experience as below in three different ritual procedures:

> "Pitch from a boat, [pi]tch from a rudder, / pitch from an o[ar, pit]ch from any (other) equipment of a boat, [dirt from em]bankment and fjord, / lard, fish train, ghee, hot bitumen, [...], *ankinūtu* -plant, / *aktam*-plant you mix, anoint him thoroughly (with the mixture), and he will recover" (*Lamaštu Series I*, *Ritual 2b*, translation Farber 2014: 146–147).[24]

> "ITS RITUAL: (a piece of) donkey's hide, fuller's paste / a soiled cloth, *ziqqatû*-fish / lard from a white pig – you mix all into one, rub him, and he will be well" (*Lamaštu Series II*, *Ritual 6a*, translation Farber 2014: 166–167).[25]

> "With unsifted (and) peel of *šusikillu* onions on embers you fumigate him. / With snake skin (and) linseed on embers you fumigate him / With sulphur, cress (and) hair combings on embers you fumigate him" (*Lamaštu Series II*, *Ritual 6b*, translation Farber 2014: 166–167).[26]

The patient is endowed with new sensitive properties, thanks to the rubbing of the ritual mixture and the fumigation on his body. According to the list of the combined ingredients, a strong bad smell is produced: onion, sulphur, as well as fish. In another ritual, the patient is smeared with pig dung.[27] This new ritual odor creates an olfactory shield, so that Lamaštu won't approach the patient again. This stench is directed at Lamaštu herself. The ritual procedures target the demoness' sensorium; she must be disgusted. In exorcistic rituals against the udug-ḫul / *Utukkū Lemnūtu* (malevolent demons), the exorcist produces a frightful noise to scare the malevolent demon (Rendu Loisel 2015). The same process is at work here by disturbing the smellscape of the demoness. Lamaštu must then be lured away with the sweet and pleasant scents of the oak and the terebinth: "Climb up [to the mounta]ins, (to) the sweet smell / the resin of oak tree and terebinth."[28] These trees grow in the mountains, the mythological residence of divine and monstrous entities (Perdibon 2019: 41–85).

Targeting Lamaštu's senses implies that she is tangibly present and "embodied" in the ritual scene. This is the role played by the figurines which are modelled during the procedures. A figurine constitutes a *materia magica* on which the expert may apply substances to create specific sensory effects. According to the ritual 6a mentioned above, the figurine of Lamaštu is clad in a soiled dress, and the *body* is hurt, addressing the sense of pain (nociception) of the demoness.[29] The ritual seeks to create a feeling, to elicit a strong emotional response in the malevolent agent, whether it is the demoness Lamaštu, or the patient themselves, who will stop fearing an invisible but concrete threat.

Even with anthropomorphic traits, the materiality of the figurine is not sufficient for the officiant to act against the malevolent entity. The embodiment of Lamaštu does not rely only on the shape of the body; it requires affecting the invisible sensory abilities of the demoness. The efficiency attributed to the olfactory effects produced in the ritual procedure is based on a parallel with the human experience of these very effects. The ritual instructions imply that the demoness shares the sensory experience and aesthetic values of humans.[30] For instance, onion, sulphur, fish produce are bad smells to humans; in the ritual, the demoness is expected to be likewise disgusted by them, and she will not approach the patient.

Conclusion

The written documentation presented above provides valuable complements to Tallay Ornan's study of the symbols, and shows that there was not always a need for the presence of anthropomorphic cult statues to interact with the divine. Embodying a supra-human entity did not only mean shaping a concrete and tangible model, be it a figurine or a cult statue. It also meant conceiving it as a body with sensory abilities that officiants could act upon. The invisible, yet perceptible sensory properties of the ritual materials and substances contributed to the *presencing* and the representation of the entity and to the ritual action of the officiant against it. The symbolic language of the senses allowed for addressing the invisible world in various ways. The ritual procedure was a dynamic setting where all the sensory channels were summoned, alongside the cult statue, or any other iconographic representation of the divine.

When it comes to the Biblical prohibition on images related to the opposition to anthropomorphism in Mesopotamia, I have shown here that a variety of

[24] *kupur eleppi* [*ku*]*pur sikkanni* / *kupur g*[*išalli kup*]*ur unūt eleppi kalama* / [*eper k*]*āri u nēberi* / *nāḫa šaman nūni ḫimēta qīra* [...] *ankinūta* [*a*]*ktam tuballal taptanaššassu-ma inêš*. See edition in Farber 2014: 74.

[25] DU_3.DU_3.BI *mašak imēri kurra ša aškāpi* / *ulāpa lupputa ziqqatâ*? / *šaman šaḫî puṣî ištēniš tuballal tapaššassu-ma inêš*. See edition in Farber 2014: 99–100.

[26] *qēma lā napâ qilip šusikilli ina pēnti tuqattaršu* / *qulēpti ṣerri zēr kitê ina pēnti tuqattaršu* / *kibrīt*(*a*) *saḫlê mušāṭī ina pēnti tuqattaršu*. See edition in Farber 2014: 100.

[27] *zê šaḫî* (*Lamaštu Series Ritual* 3, l. 58 in Farber 2014: 150–151).

[28] *elî-ma* [*ana šad*]*î irīši ṭābi* / *ḫīl allāni u buṭunāni* (*Lamaštu Series* II, *inc*. 12, l.188–189 in Farber 2014: 178–179).

[29] See above with ritual 6a, but also in *Lamaštu Series I*, *Ritual* 3, in Farber 2014: 150–151.

[30] On the aesthetic values attributed to sensory phenomena, see de Zorzi 2019; Rendu Loisel 2020a.

objects and means were used in ritual contexts to present and make present the divine entity. This went far beyond the visual realm: an entity could be present also by means of its smell, sound and taste. The divine belonged to the realm of the senses, which had its own codes and symbolic language. The rejection of images came from a milieu of scholars for whom figuration was not the only way to represent the divine. A ritual scene is a complex place where no medium surpasses another; they complement each other, so that the supra-human entity will be undoubtedly present.

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Chapter 41:
The Hunters' Palette.
A guide to weapons used in Egypt in the late Predynastic Period[1]

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Abstract. The palette usually identified in research as the Hunters' Palette, belongs to a relatively small group of ceremonial cosmetic palettes with relief decoration, which are typical of the late Predynastic period in Egypt. The scene depicted on the Hunters' Palette contains invaluable information on the organization of combat and the arsenal in the Nile Valley during the second half of the fourth millennium. The importance of the palette for the study of Egyptian hunter-warriors and their weapons, the subject which is the focus of this study, cannot be overestimated. The range of weapons shown stretches from simple double-curbed bows, that use arrows with horizontal chisel-shaped heads, to various types of maces, boomerangs, lances and javelins. The detailed manner of execution, showing for example a raised midrib on the lance heads, even makes it possible to deduce the material they were made of, in this particular case metal, probably copper. On a wider perspective, the two groups of hunter-warriors on the palette reflect the political and ideological messages that the palette set out to immortalize and transmit — power, authority, and government.

Keywords: Hunters' Palette, cosmetic palettes, Late Predynastic period, hunters, warriors, lion hunt, weapons, double-curbed bow, mace, lance, javelin, boomerang.

Introduction

The palette usually identified in research as the Hunters' Palette, belongs to a unique, relatively small group of ceremonial cosmetic palettes with relief decoration, which are typical markers of the late Predynastic period in Egypt (Figure 1).[2] Discussion of the chronological, ceremonial and artistic aspects of these palettes, as well as the background to their appearance and their function, is abundant in the literature (e.g. Petrie 1953; Fischer 1958; Baumgartel 1960: 90–105; Spencer 1980: 79–80; Needler 1984: 328–334; Baines 1993, 1995 and 2022; Ciałowicz 1991; Etienne 1999; Köhler 2002; O'Connor 2002; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012; Hendrickx *et al.* 2016 and 2020), and beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on the weapons that are depicted on the Hunters' Palette.

Some reference points to the discussion are, however, necessary:

- Cosmetic palettes with relief-decoration are divided into two groups: those with images of animals, usually described in the literature as 'heraldic animals',[3] and those showing images of 'historical' events that concentrate on fighting and subduing the enemy.[4]
- Nearly all the decorated cosmetic palettes were acquired on the antiquities market. The exceptions are two palettes that were discovered in the excavations of the sacred precinct of Hierakonpolis: the Palette of King Narmer, and

[1] All dates are BCE. The object numbers beginning with IAA mean Israel Antiquities Authority.

[2] On the chronology and periodization of ancient Egypt see Kaiser 1990; Hendrickx 1996; Gilbert 2004: 143–145.

[3] For example, Large heraldic animals from Hierakonpolis in the Ashmolean Museum (Ash. E3924, Quibell and Green 1902: 41, pl. 28; Petrie 1953: 13, pl. F; Fischer 1958: 65, figs. 1–2; Ciałowicz 1991: 4–46, fig. 11a-b); heraldic animals from Minshat Ezzat (Baghdadi 1999); Small heraldic animals (Louvre E 11052, Petrie 1953: pls. B8, C9; Fischer 1958: 65, figs. 7-8; Ciałowicz 1991: 47–48, fig. 12a-b); small Fragment in the Louvre Museum (Louvre E 11648, Fischer 1958: 65, figs. 3-4; Ciałowicz 1991: 50, fig. 15 a–b); Fragment of heraldic animals in the Metropolitan Museum (MMA 28.9.8, Fischer 1958: 82, figs. 19–20; Ciałowicz 1991: 48–49, fig. 13); small Fragment of heraldic animals in the Brooklyn Museum (35.1272, Needler 1984: 330–331, pl. 60; Ciałowicz 1991: 51, fig. 18); Fragment of heraldic animals in the British Museum (BM3207, Petrie 1953: 12, pl. C: 10-11; Spencer 1980: 80: 577, pl. 65; Ciałowicz 1991: 52, fig. 20); Brussels Fragment in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (E6196, Petrie 1953: 15, pl. H:22; Fischer 1958: 65, figs 5–6; Ciałowicz 1991: 51, fig. 16); heraldic animals in Cairo Museum (JE 60579, Petrie 1953: pl. H22; Fischer 1958: 65).

[4] For example: the 'Towns'/'Libyan' Palette in the Cairo Museum (JE 27434 = CG 14238; Petrie 1953: 14–15, pl. G19-20; Saleh and Sourouzian 1987: cat. no. 7; Ciałowicz 1991: 56–57, fig. 25); the 'Battlefield' Palette divided between the British Museum, and the Ashmolean Museum (BM 20719, Ash. 1892.1171; Petrie 1953: 14, pls. D-F; Spencer 1980: 79–80, pl. 64; Ciałowicz 1991: 53–54, fig. 22); the 'Palette of the Bulls' in the Louvre Museum (Louvre 11255, Petrie 1953: 15, pl. G17-18); the 'Palette of King Narmer' in the Cairo Museum (JE 32169 = CG 14716, Quibell 1900: 10, pl. 29; Petrie 1953: pls. J–F; Saleh and Sourouzian 1987: cat. no. 8); Small Fragment in the Brooklyn Museum (66.175, Needler 1984: 332–334, figs. 42–43, pl. 61). As to whether these images reflect historical events or have strictly symbolic and ceremonial meaning, see Baines 1995; O'Connor 2002: 6 and references there.

Figure 1a–b. The Hunters' Palette. a) The Hunters' Palette, courtesy of the British Museum;
b) Drawing of the Hunter's Palette after Hendrix *et al.* 2020: fig.29 (courtesy of Merel Eyckerman).

the Large heraldic animals palette (Quibell 1900: 10, pl. 29; Quibell and Green 1902: 13–14, pls. 28, 72; Petrie 1953: 13, pl. F; Fischer 1958: 65, figs. 1-2; Ciałowicz 1991: 43–46, fig. 11a–b;), and a palette decorated with images of animals from Tomb 82 at Minshat Ezzat in the Delta (Baghdadi 1999; O'Connor 2002: 24, fig. 7).[5]

- The palettes with relief decoration are attributed to the late Predynastic period, up to the beginning of the early dynastic period, approximately 3,300–3,000 (Naqada IIIa–b and not later than Naqada IIIc1), and possibly even as early as Naqada IId. The group with the animal-motifs is considered to be early, the group with the 'historical' imagery, is considered late.[6]
- The ceremonial role of the palettes is not in doubt. Scholars tend to attribute them to temples, in which they acted as minor monuments, commemorative palettes, focus of ritual. Scholars also attribute to them a central role in the ritualistic and ideological Egyptian system — as part of the ceremony of body-painting before embarking on a hunt or a battle — arresting chaos and imposing order.[7] They seem to be part of an assemblage of ceremonial artifacts manufactured by the rulers of Upper Egypt in the time of the unification, such as the monumental mace-heads of kings Scorpion and Narmer that carry 'historical' images, and dozens of tubular ivory shafts decorated with images of animals (Quibell 1900: 8–10, pls. 25-26a–c; Baines 1955: 109–121; Baumgartel 1960: 115–121, pl. 8-18; Adams 1974: 3–4, 60, pls. 38:325, 39:325; Ciałowicz 1987: 31–45, figs. 3-6, pls. 7-8 and 1992b; Millet 1990; Whitehouse 1992 and literature therein; Sebbane 2016: 438–441).

The Hunters' Palette with its unique characteristics is attributed to the group of cosmetic palettes with 'historical' imagery, and is deemed the earliest of this group. The Palette of King Narmer is considered the latest (see nn. 3, 5).

The Characteristics of the Scene and Its Components

Since the sudden appearance of the fragments of the Hunters' Palette on the antiquities market of Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century,[8] this exceptional palette, which stands apart from the rest of the group of decorated cosmetic palettes, has been the subject of much discussion (Hendrickx *et al.* 2020, and see there for summary of the research history and literature). In addition to its size (66.8 × 25.7 cm),[9] the Hunters' Palette is exceptional in being decorated on one face only,[10] in its singular design, which combines vertical axis, horizontal axis, and circularity (Tefnin 1979: 221–229, and see fig. 1 herein; O'Connor 2002: 18–19; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012: 60, and see n. 80; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: 136–140),[11] and in its theme, which focuses on wild-animals' hunt and encompasses the organization of a hunting party and the hunt itself — chasing and trapping wild animals, and a lion's hunt. Hunting scenes are in fact an important motif in Egyptian Predynastic iconography. They decorate pottery vessels, appear in tombs' wall-paintings and in rock paintings. They had a central role in defining the power and importance of the social elites, and in illustrating and disseminating the ideology that emphasizes the importance of order, of controlling natural forces, and of keeping chaos at bay. However, the Hunters' Palette has no parallel in the complexity of the scene and the level of details, which

[5] According to the pottery assemblage the excavator dated the tomb to the beginning of the first dynasty.

[6] These attributions rely on visual analysis of the palettes and are not definite. The palettes with images of animals are smaller than the ones with 'historical' imagery, and do not have scenes that may be interpreted as messages of victory, nor symbols that can be interpreted as hieroglyphs. They show no formal organization or order; the eyes of the animals are hollowed, and were probably inlayed. Palettes with 'historical' images are formally organized; most, if not all, show battles and vanquishing enemies, and may be interpreted as messages of victory. The scenes incorporate symbols and signs that may be interpreted as hieroglyphs or as symbols of power and authority. On the basis of these characteristics, the palettes with animal-motifs are attributed to the beginning of the struggle between Upper and Lower Egypt, and those that have formal scenes to the late stages of the struggle, when the rulers of upper Egypt won. We should remember that the late Predynastic period and the beginning of the Dynastic period encompass at least 250 years, during which all types of cosmetic palettes were manufactured. This is a long period, and at the moment we lack reliable archaeological data as to where they were manufactured, and where they were used. Moreover, the Palette of Narmer, which is considered to be late in the group of palettes with 'historical' scenes and the Large 'heraldic animals' palette, which belongs stylistically to the early group, were discovered side by side in the Hierakonpolis Main Deposit, while the palette with animal-decorations from the tomb at Minshat Ezzat is dated on the basis of the pottery assemblage in the tomb to the beginning of the first dynasty (see n. 4).

[7] In his study of the decorated cosmetic palettes, their meaning and function, O'Connor distinguishes between the two faces of the palettes in function and in subject-matter. He claims that the primary face, with the grinding circle defined by a raised border, bears a ritual-ceremonial-mythological scene that was designed in circular movement around the border, and supplicates the deity to whom the palette is dedicated. The other face is of secondary importance and represents the Egyptian ruler. The scene depicted there was designed along a vertical axis, and its main theme is subduing chaos and imposing order. This face acts in an apotropaic function (O'Connor 2002 and literature therein).

[8] Three large fragments have survived, two are on display in the British museum (EA20790, EA 20792, Spencer 1980: 79–80, no. 575), the third is in the Louvre (E11254).

[9] The only other relief-decorated palette similar in size to the Hunters' Palette is that of King Narmer (64 × 42 cm).

[10] Only two other palettes with one decorated face are known, and they belong to the heraldic animals group. One is the Minshat Ezzat palette, the other is in the Metropolitan museum (see n. 2).

[11] It seems that the image of the two hunter-warriors groups that decorate the palette in two parallel lines led many scholars to illustrate it horizontally. This is also the way it is displayed in the Louvre. However, the Hunters' Palette is not different from the other relief-decorated cosmetic palettes, and therefore the centrality of the vertical axis in its design — observable in the images of the lion's hunt, the building, and the double bull, as well as in the way it was set and used — is not in doubt. This is also how it is displayed in the British Museum.

renders it the most important of its kind (Wilkinson 2000: 27 with references there; Hendrickx 2010; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012: 58–63). As already said, these topics are outside the scope of this study, which focuses on the hunter-warriors and their weapons (see *Hunter-Warriors* section below), but I would still like to discuss the lion's hunt.

The centrality and significance of the Lion's Hunt image, as well as its uniqueness, is not in doubt, and as a result the Hunters' Palette is sometimes presented as the Lion Hunt Palette, Chasse aux Lions, or Löwenjagdpalette (Baumgartel 1960: 96–100; Tefnin 1979: 222; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: 124). The event is depicted twice — the struggle between the lion and the hunters at the upper part of the palette, and the vanquished lion at the bottom. The image of the struggle shows frontal confrontation between the lion and two hunter-warriors. The bow is at the ready, pointing directly at the hunted lion, who had already been hit by two arrows to the head. The hunter draws the bow, with the arrow in place, ready to shoot (see *Weapons* section, simple double-curved bow). The image implies that the arrow is about to be released, the third of six that were shot in total. The lion is pouncing on another hunter-fighter, armed with a bow and a mace, who is lying at his feet or fleeing from him. Behind the lion there is another large feline, probably a lioness.[12] The image of the lion at the bottom of the palette seals the sequence of events. The lion is vanquished, seemingly dead, with six arrows stuck in its body. In addition to the two arrows in the previous image, three are stuck in the back of its neck and in its back, and one in its left rear leg.[13] The scene of hunting and subduing the lion in the Hunters' Palette is unusual among the hunting scenes which are common in Predynastic Egypt. It is plausible, however, that the stylized depiction, verging on the canonical, did not emerge from the void, and indicates a history of use in Egypt during the late Predynastic and early dynastic periods. The formidable lion on the Battlefield Palette, standing in the middle of a battlefield devouring one of the fallen men, supports this assumption (Petrie 1953: 14, pls. D–F; Spencer 1980: 79–80, pl. 64).[14] Notably, there are those who consider that the lion represents the king vanquishing his enemies (Baines 1995: 112; Wilkinson 2000: 27–28).

The lion-hunt scene in the Hunters' Palette echoes in subject, ideology and chronology early Near Eastern pictorial tropes that show the struggle between the hunter, shepherd, leader, or king, and the lion.[15] The earliest image we know of decorates the inside of a pottery bowl from Arpachiya in northern Iraq, which was found in Tomb G-2, in an assemblage attributed to the Chalcolithic-Halafian culture of the second half of the fifth millennium. The image is of a running man holding a bow, apparently of the simple double-curved type (see *Weapons* section below), at the ready to shoot an attacking lion (Hijara 1980: 133, 144, fig. 10: 342a; Collon 2008: 94, fig. 1; Ornan 2023: 26–27, fig. 2.3). The painting preserves a crucial moment leading to the confrontation. The man and lion are moving towards each other, seeking contact; the bow is pulled, but the arrow not yet released.

The next group of images comes from large assemblages of about a thousand clay seals that were discovered at Tell Majnuna in the upper Khabur, northern Syria, and are attributed to the late Chalcolithic period of the fourth millennium, between 3,800–3,600 (McMahon 2009). A small group shows a scene of frontal confrontation between a man and a lion, in two modes: a man holding a long lance in both hands, stabbing a lion that stands on its hind legs (McMahon 2009: 116–118, fig. 1; Ornan 2023: 27–28, fig. 2.4); a man stabbing with a dagger a lion standing on its hind legs (McMahon 2009: 116–118, fig. 2).[16]

Another group of seals that is important for our discussion presents images of a lion trapped or caged. These seals depict a completely different situation than the confrontation and struggle immortalized in the previous group. Here the struggle is over, the lion 'king of the animals', who symbolizes the force and wildness of nature, is subdued and caged. In addition

[12] Most of the studies of the palette do not refer to the image of the lioness. When it is mentioned, the discussion is only whether it is a lioness or a lion's cub (Baumgartel 1960: 97; Ciałowicz 1991: 55–56). On the status and role of the lion and lioness in gendered images in the ancient Near East, and their relation to reality, see Ornan forthcoming. I am grateful to the author for allowing me access to her research before it was published, and for the instructive discussion on the subject. It is possible that what we see here is the tendency, customary in images, to minimize the status of the lioness and aggrandize the status of the lion. The lioness is placed behind the lion, who is confronting the hunter. She takes no part in the struggle, and more than that, the impression is that he protects her (see n. 15).

[13] A contrasting interpretation is that the images are of two hunted lions, emphasizing that they are not seen as dead or dying (Baumgartel 1960: 97; Spencer 1980: 79; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012: 60). It seems, however, that the survival prospects of a lion that was hit by six arrows is not high.

[14] The lion on the Battlefield Palette differs from the one on the Hunters' Palette in the forming technique and style, as can be seen, for example, in the mane, eyes and ears. The differences indicate distinctive workshops, reflecting various traditions, and possibly a chronological gap (see n. 5).

[15] It seems that the motif of the lion being vanquished by a leader, ruler, king, with its multiple layers of meanings that is known in ancient Near Eastern art from the second half of the fifth millennium to the first half of the first millennium (Ornan 2023, and literature there; Ornan forthcoming), is not typical of the Egyptian tradition (Altenmüller 1980).

[16] Ornan (2023: 27) suggests that the seals show a lioness. She also identifies as lionesses the two large felines in a Neolithic relief of the ninth millennium found in Sayburç south-east Turkey, both identified by the excavator as leopards (Özdöğan 2022). Consequently, Ornan suggests that the image and status of the lioness changed during the second half of the fourth millennium, as a result of changes in the social, economic and ideological system of the ancient Near East that accompanied the development of urban centers (Ornan forthcoming, and see n. 16).

to the ideological message, it seems that the seals also reflect a more general custom of trapping lions and wild animals, and bringing them from the arid wilderness to the civilized urban centers, where they were imprisoned for ritual purposes, which probably included ceremonial sacrifices (McMahon 2009: 118–121, figs. 3-6; Ornan 2023: 27, fig. 2.5). A reality similar ideologically and physically emerges from the Predynastic Egyptian paintings whose subjects are hunting and trapping wild animals, transporting them to civilization, and caging them for ceremonial and ritual purposes, which likewise included ceremonial sacrifices (Hendrickx 2010; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012: 58–63; and see n. 22 here). A fragment of a royal basalt stele, known as the Lion Hunt Stele, discovered in Uruq, and attributed to the period between 3,300 and 3,100, presents the king hunting a lion in two positions. In the lower register the king holds a drawn bow with an arrow at the ready; the struggle had reached a climax, with three arrows having already hit the lion. In the upper register the king holds a long lance in both hands, forcefully stabbing a lion standing on its hind legs (Yadin 1963: 118; Moortgat 1969: 14, pl. 14; Hansen 2003: 22, fig. 5; Collon 2008: 95, fig. 3). In conclusion, the evidence that keeps accumulating from images of the fifth and fourth millennia in Mesopotamia bears witness to a long history in the ancient Near East of the concept of the leader, ruler, king, struggling with lions and subduing them, a concept that is probably related to the establishment of agricultural villages and large urban centers.[17] The scenes of the lion-hunt in the Hunters' Palette indicate that this concept was also part of the Egyptian Predynastic culture. Side by side with the clear ceremonial function and message, the images seem to contain a realistic aspect of a lion hunt, using weapons available in the fourth, even fifth millennia. I would suggest that a direct confrontation between a lance-carrying hunter-warrior on foot and an attacking lion, as described in the seals from Tell Majnuna, or the upper register of the Uruk relief, let alone such confrontation using a dagger, as is described in some of the Tell Majnuna seals, contradicts common sense, and chances of success are not large, to put it mildly. It is plausible that the hunter-warrior will find his death in such circumstances. On the other hand, remote confrontation using bow and arrow, allowing repeated wounding and gradual weakening of the lion with a large number of arrows, as is shown in the Hunters' Palette, increases the possibility of success. A hunter carrying a lance can complete the killing of the helpless, wounded lion with impunity. Another realistic aspect of the Hunters' Palette image is that the two hunter-warriors that confront the lion are depicted in the same way as the other hunter-warriors, and carry the same equipment. It is also important to emphasize that they are not among the leaders of the groups (see *Hunter-Warriors* section below), in contrast to the Mesopotamian images, in which the person fighting the lion and vanquishing it is identified as the leader, ruler, king.

[17] The appearance of large felines (leopards? lionesses?) in a ninth-millennium relief from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic site of Sayburç in south-eastern Turkey, hints at processes that started with the change in life-style related to the shift to sedentary settlements (Özdöğan 2022; Ornan forthcoming).

The Hunter-Warriors and Their Weapons

The hunter-warriors march in two parallel lines. There is an impression of two well-equipped groups that came together for the hunt (Figures 1–3). A leader/commander carrying a regional/tribal(?) standard heads each group.[18] It is difficult to avoid the impression that the artist wanted to express power in the stance of the figures and the detailed rendering of the weapons.[19] The manner in which the figures are organized and equipped, taken in the context of what is known of the social reality of Predynastic Egypt, seems to identify them unequivocally as hunter-warriors, or, more realistically for the period under discussion, as warrior-hunters. This alternative interpretation stems from the growing conviction in research that the role of hunting in the daily economy of Egypt in the second half of the fourth millennium was small, yet it was important for displaying the power and status of the elites (Baumgartel 1960: 99; Spencer 1980: 79; Köhler 2002: 508–510; Gilbert 2004: 84–86; Hamblin 2006: 304–305; Hendrickx 2006: 735–736; *Id*. 2010: 129–131 and 2011; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2012: 58–63). For the purpose of the present paper, it is important to emphasize that this is a unique depiction for the period, which presents in detail the arsenal in use: simple double-curved bows and arrows with horizontal chisel-shaped head, an array of mace-types,[20] boomerangs,[21] lances and javelins (see discussion below).

Four figures that stand apart in their appearance and position on the palette are actively hunting. Two are hunters, the only unarmed figures on the palette; they hold a rope/lasso and are in the act of capturing horned

[18] The decorated standards with the falcon-head are considered in research as representing the West. The hunter-warrior in the left line, fifth place, was identified as bearing a standard with symbols that represent the East (Baumgartel 1960: 98; Tefnin 1979: 226, fig. 1; Hendrickx *et al*. 2020: 136, fig. 30). Hendrickx *et al.* noted that the artefact is a lance that was re-designed as a standard pole.

[19] Hendrickx and Eyckerman (2012: 60–63) attribute a message of power also to the details of the attire, and in particular to the tails that decorate the belts of the hunter-warriors, which they identify as tails of the wild African dog, *Lycaon pictus*. Wild dogs decorate cosmetic palettes of the heraldic animals' type, and in the Predynastic period they were seen as protective against chaos (Fischer 1958; Ciałowicz 1991; Hendrickx 2006: 740–743).

[20] In the group of maces we include the double-sided striking implements whose identification in the assemblages of the period is uncertain (see discussion of maces in *Weapons* section below).

[21] There are scholars who identify some as flint knives (Clark, Philips, and Staley 1974: 324; Ciałowicz 1987: 58–59; see discussion of boomerangs in *Weapons* section below).

Figure 2a–b. Restitutions of the hunters' palette (courtesy of Merel Eyckerman).
a) after Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: fig. 33; b) after Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: fig. 34.

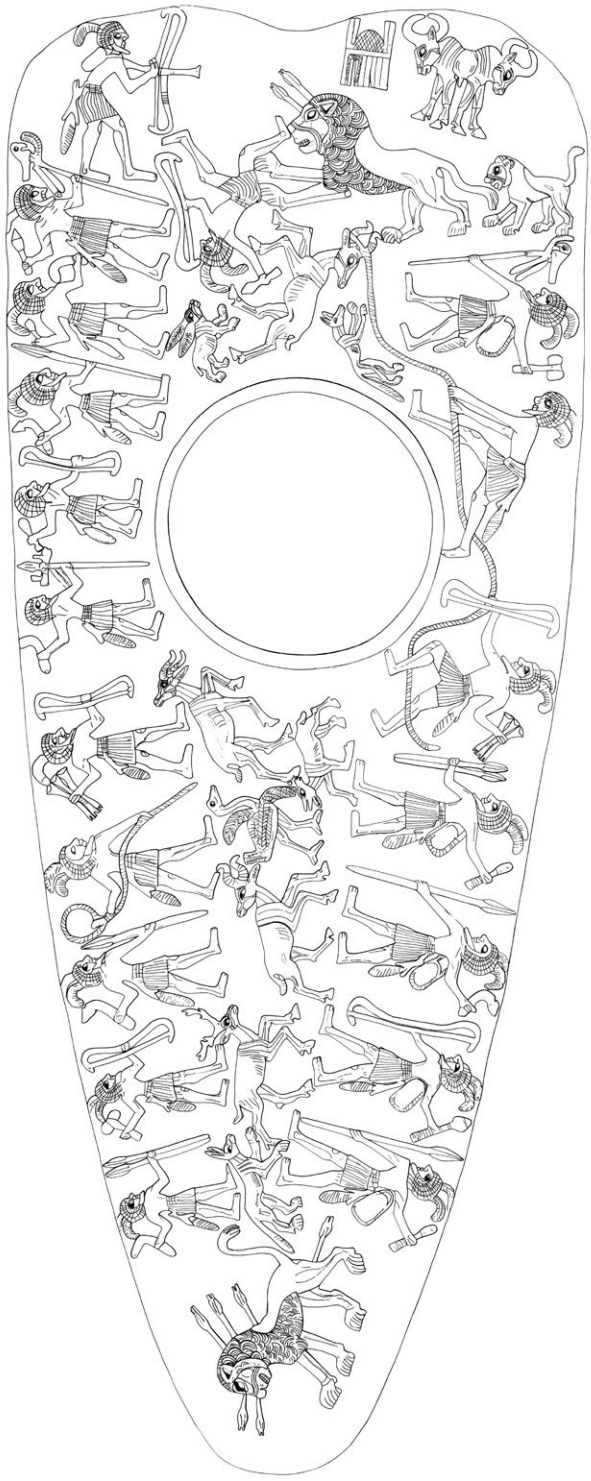

Figure 3. Restitution by Sebbane after Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: fig. 29 (courtesy of Merel Eyckerman). Drawing by Noga Z'evi.

animals. The artist integrated one of these 'hunter-trappers' in each group of hunter-warriors, but in a way that makes it clear that they are not part of the figures marching to the hunt, they rather belong to the hunting scene itself.[22] Also part of the hunting scene are the two hunter-warriors that confront the lion outside the regular marching lines. As already said, we consider this the central scene, both in terms of subject, and because of the way it is depicted, and its position on the palette (see *Characteristics of the Scene* above).

The hunter-warriors, as mentioned above, march in two groups and are fully equipped and armed. With the exception of the two standard-bearing leaders and the archer in the left row (see discussion of the double-curved bow below), each figure carries two types of weapons, in most cases one for hand-to-hand combat, the other a long-range weapon. The weapons for hand-to-hand combat are maces (see n. 19) and lances; for middle- and long-range: bows, boomerangs (see n. 20), and javelins.[23] The choice of weapons is not coincidental, but selected to reinforces the fighting and hunting ability of the individual, and therefore of the group, and I believe strengthens the assumption that these are 'elite-corps' groups of hunter-warriors. Moreover, they carry weapons that were developed specifically for fighting against people — the maces and probably also the lance. Side by side with these, however, there are also multi-functional weapons, which were probably developed initially for hunting, but once conflicts and wars increased, were used also as regular weapons due to their high efficiently. To this group belong the bow, the javelin, and perhaps also the throwing-stick/boomerang.[24] The hunters in the right-hand line, led by a standard-bearer armed with a double-sided striking implement, also carry a purse/sac around their waist, that may have used for provisions (Hamblin 2006: 314–315; Hendrickx and Eyckerman 2017; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: 138). There were suggestions to identify these items as shields (Nibbi 2003; Gilbert 2004: 44), but this does not seem convincing.

[22] The presentation of the two hunters capturing horned animals with a lasso corresponds to other images of hunting, and to the notion of the central position that capturing wild animals in the uninhabited desert and bringing them to the settled areas had. The hunter-trappers are integral to the hunter-warriors formation on the palette and play an important role in it. When they are compared with the other, fully armed, hunter-warriors, it may be possible at first to minimize their role, but they seem to have played a key part in the various hunting campaigns whose mission it was to capture rather than kill the wild animals. Moreover, the lasso, which does not belong to the arsenal of weapons, requires a high level of skill.

[23] The last hunter-warrior in the left line, which is led by a standard-bearer carrying a mace, is armed in an unusual manner. He carries two javelins and a boomerang, weapons that are used for middle- and long-range combat, and has no hand-to-hand combat weapon.

[24] For conflict-development during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period, see Bar-Yosef 2010; LeBlanc 2010; Sebbane 2023: 137–138.

The following list details all the weapons carried by the 16 hunter-warriors (14 marching in two groups; two fighting the lion).[25]

- Mace and standard — the leader of the group in the left line.
- Double-sided striking implement and standard — the leader of the group in the right line.
- Throwing-stick/boomerang and lance — figures 3, 5, 7 in the left line; figure 3 in the right line.
- Mace and bow — figure 4 in the left line; figure 4 (or 5, once the missing figure is reconstructed; see n. 24) in the right line; figure lying at the feet of the lion (or fleeing) at the upper part of the palette.
- Mace and boomerang —figure 2 in the left line.
- Boomerang two javelins —figure 9, the last in the left line.
- Mace and lance — figure 5 (or 6, once the missing figure is reconstructed; see n. 24), the last in the right line.
- Double-sided striking implement and bow — figure 8 in the left line.
- Bow — figure 6 in the left line; figure 2 in the right line; figure shooting the captured lion at the upper part of the palette.

The Weapons

Simple double-curved bows

This is the common medium- and long-range weapon in the palette, held by seven of the hunter-warriors (see list above), or eight, if we accept the reconstruction suggested for the missing figure (see n. 24). A number of details underline the importance of this bow in the arsenal of the hunter-warriors. (a) The only figure holding a single weapon is the bowman holding a bow in his left hand and three arrows with chisel-shaped points in his right. This exceptional image seems to indicate that the artist considered it important to illustrate this weapon in detail. The other hunter-warriors, even those armed with a bow, hold two weapons, and arrows are therefore not depicted. (b) The lion is killed by a bowman using a double-curved bow and arrows with horizontal chisel-shaped points. The hunter is drawing the bow in preparation to shooting, and both his hands are occupied. The artist kept the scene realistic and did not add another weapon.[26] On the other hand, he added a singular item — a purse/sac which the figure carries on its right shoulder/back. This item is similar to the purses/sacs that are worn around the waists of the hunter-warriors in the right line but the fact that it is slung on the bowman's back/shoulder, allows an interpretation of it as a quiver.

Bows of various types were the common fighting and hunting weapon in Egypt from the late Paleolithic to the Roman periods. Remains of wooden bows from the early periods are scarce, and they rarely appear in images. However, the limited evidence indicates that the double-curved bow was the preferred weapon in the Predynastic and early dynastic periods. As for the arrows and arrow-heads that were found in a variety of types and raw materials, both actual finds and pictorial ones indicate that chisel-shaped horizontal arrowhead (apparently made of flint) were frequently used (Emery 1938: 45–48, pls. 20-22; Yadin 1963: 6–9, 46–48, 62–64, 118–119, and see further references there; Clark *et al.* 1974; Gilbert 2004: 44–58, figs. 5.13, 5.14, 5.19).

The Hunters' Palette, which shows seven hunter-warriors armed with double-curved bows, demonstrating their use in a hunt with chisel-shaped arrowheads, seems to be its earliest detailed image in Egypt and elsewhere.[27] An unusual find from the Cave of the Warrior in Wadi

[25] Originally there were 19 figures of hunter-warriors, but only 16 are fully preserved. The remaining three were all in the righthand line: two are partially preserved, and one is completely missing. Hendrickx *et al.* (2020: 142–145, figs. 33–34) are the only scholars who offered possible reconstruction, and they put forward two alternatives. They suggest that the figure holding a bow in one hand and with a leg in a running or shooting position, would either have held a mace in the missing hand (Figure 2a), or the loop of a rope (lasso), which would be an extension of the rope used by the figure standing before it to restrain a horned animal (Figure 2b). The first reconstruction is in accord with my notion that each hunter-warrior carried weapons for both contact and long-distance combat. The second does not conform with the naturalistic hunting scene; there is no logic in a hunter-warrior holding a bow in one hand and a lasso in the other. As noted above, the two hunters who catch horned animals with a lasso are not otherwise armed; they require both hands for their actions. I would like to add another possibility, that the figure held three arrows in its other hand, like the hunter-warrior occupying the same position in the parallel line (Figure 3). This interpretation keeps the duality and symmetry in the palette, and emphasizes the importance of the double-curved bow in the hunter-warriors arsenal (see discussion below). As for the missing figure, Hendrickx *et al.* suggest that it was armed with two lances and a double axe, arguing that no hunter-warrior in the palette carries the same weapons as the one standing before or behind him. I prefer to amend the terms they use to javelins and a double-sided implement (see below discussion of these terms). However, considering the high frequency of maces in the weapons assemblages of the period in Egypt, and in the depiction of the hunter-warriors in the Hunters' Palette, as well as the paucity of double-sided striking implements in both, I suggest that the figure carried two javelins and a mace.

[26] The force of the double-curved bow, and its importance as a deadly weapon in the Predynastic and early dynastic periods is apparent in a fragment of cosmetic palette with a figure of a warrior struck by an arrow with a chisel-shape point (Hayes 1953: 29, fig. 23).

[27] The earliest pictorial depiction of a simple double-curved bow, may be the schematic line-drawing of a hunter armed with a bow confronting an attacking lion on a pottery bowl from Arpachiya, Mesopotamia, dated to the second half of the fifth millennium (Collon 2023: 26–27, fig. 2.3; and see discussion of lion hunting in the *Characteristics of the Scene* section above).

Figure 4. Simple double-curved bow, Cave of the Warrior (K.23988, 23989).

el-Makkukh (Schick 1998) should be mentioned here. Among the burial gifts that survived thanks to the dry climate, was a double-curved bow, which is undoubtedly similar to the bows in the Hunters' Palette (McEwen 1998; see Figure 4 herein).[28] The bow was deposited after it had been broken into two equal parts, apparently in a deliberate ceremonial 'killing', as part of the burial rites (Clark *et al.* 1974: 325).[29] The two pieces could be restored perfectly to the complete bow (125.4 cm long), and thus it was possible to reconstruct similar bows and judge their manufacturing techniques and shooting capabilities.[30] McEwen (1998: 52) concludes that "There can be no doubt that the el-Makkukh bow was an effective weapon and hunting tool."[31]

The bow from the Cave of the Warrior, which has been ignored by researchers of ancient Egypt, is so far the earliest of its type in the ancient Near East. Moreover, its dating to the late Chalcolithic period, which is based on the composition of the burial-gifts assemblage and on carbon-dating of a number of finds, including the bow itself, identifies it as at least 500 years earlier than the Hunters' Palette (Jull *et al.* 1998; the bow sample [AA22234] had an uncalibrated date of 5120±50 BP, or 3978-3808 BCE). Its significance to the study of the Egyptian double-curved bows in the Predynastic period, and in general, is obvious.

Maces

Maces are the common hand-to-hand combat-weapon in the palette, held by eight hunter-warriors (see list above), or nine according to the suggested reconstruction of the missing figure (see n. 24).[32] This is probably a reflection of it being the most important hand-to-hand combat weapon in the early Near East and in Egypt between the tenth and fourth millennia, and the earliest one (Yadin 1963: 11–12, 40–43, 120–125, and further references there; Sebbane 2016: 421–423 and 2023). Stone mace-heads in a range of types are common in the archaeological assemblages of the Predynastic and early-dynastic periods in Egypt. These assemblages include hundreds of artifacts that were discovered in dwellings, burials and temples, and can be classified as two major typological groups: carinated and rounded ones. The two groups are in turn sub-divided into types (Petrie 1920: 22–24; Baumgartel 1960:

[28] Other burial gifts,most of them made of organic materials such as wood, leather and linen — included textiles, mats and macramé, sandals, and bowls.
[29] If this interpretation is correct, this is the earliest evidence to a 'ceremonial killing' of a bow.
[30] The details of the bows in the Hunters' Palette and the proportional size of the bows and figures, indicate that they were of similar size.
[31] In contrast to the inexplicable claim of Ashkenazi *et al.* (2021: 385) that "At 125 cm length it is relatively short and therefore not a very effective weapon."
[32] Double-sided striking implements are included in this group (see n. 19, and discussion below).

105–121; Ciałowicz 1987; Gilbert 2004: 35–41; Sebbane 2009: 67–78, 116–127 and further references there).

Carinated mace-heads of various subtypes were used in the Neolithic and Predynastic cultures of the Nile valley from the fifth millennium. First appearing in the late Neolithic (Naqada Ia–IIb), they were common during the early Predynastic (Naqada Ic–IIb), became scarce in the middle Predynastic period (Naqada IIc–d), and disappeared completely in the late Predynastic period (Naqada IIIa–b).[33] Rounded mace-heads in general, and pear-shaped in particular, were produced by the cultures of Anatolia, Mesopotamia and the southern Levant since the Pre-Pottery Neolithic of the tenth millennium, and appeared in Egypt during the early Predynastic period (Naqada IIa). They increased in frequency during the middle Predynastic period (Naqada IIc–d), and reached their zenith during the late Predynastic period (Naqada IIIa–b), when they completely supplanted the carinated mace-heads. In addition to its frequent occurrence in the material culture, the mace is also documented in images of the period in contexts pertaining to weapons and battles, and in ceremonial contexts, as a symbol of authority and subduing the enemy (Case and Payne 1962; Hall 1986; Ciałowicz 1988; Köhler 2002: 501–503; Gilbert 2004: 88–93; Sebbane 2009: 228–236, 271–273).[34]

In studies of the Hunters' Palette, the maces were usually identified and drawn with a round head, and most, if not all, were attributed to the Pear-Shaped mace-heads group (cf. Petrie 1953: 12–13; Baumgartel 1960: 98–99; Ciałowicz 1987: 58; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020). I suggest that there are, in fact, a number of different types in the Hunters' Palette:

- Maces with carinated fighting head, characterized by a tall conical outline (Ciałowicz 1987: 21–22, fig. 1: Type II, pl. II:3; Gilbert 2004: 35–36, Type 2; Sebbane 2009: 118, pl. 51–52).[35] Three of the figures carry this type of mace. The leader at the head of the left-hand line, the penultimate figure in the right-hand line, and the figure lying at the feet of the lion, or fleeing from it, at the upper part of the palette. Carinated fighting mace-heads characterized by a tall conical outline is the group's least common subtype in the archaeological record, and is particularly scarce in the group of conical-shaped mace-heads. They are earlier than most carinated mace-heads, and are twice as tall and heavy. Such mace-heads were found at the site of Shaheinab in Nubia (Arkell 1953: fig. 15), in the desert of Fayum (Caton-Thompson and Gardner 1934: 33, pl. 30:2) and at Mostagedda in Upper Egypt (Brunton 1937: pl. 42:21, 22, 33). In Israel they were discovered in the Chalcolithic site of Gilat, and we consider them an import from Egypt and Nubia (Rowan *et al.* 2006: 590–592, table 12.24, fig 12.25:1; Sebbane 2009: pl. 52:10, 54:7; *Id.* 2016: 426–430, fig. 2:1; and see here Figure 5).

Figure 5. Carinated mace-head with tall conical outline, Gilat (IAA 75-1117).

- Maces with a head thickened and rounded at the top. Three hunter-warriors carry this type — the second and fourth figures in the left line, and the last figure in the right line. The maces are not carefully depicted, particularly when compared with other images of the period that show maces with piriform heads, such as the Narmer Palette (Quibell 1900: 10, pl. 29; Petrie 1953: 16–17, pls. J–K; Yadin 1963: 122, 124; Saleh and Sourouzian 1987: cat. no. 8; Hendrickx, Forster and Eycker-man 2016), or the ivory label of King Den (Yadin 1963: 124; Spencer 1980: 65:460, pls. 49: 460, 53: 460F).[36] It is plausible to assume that the maces in the Hunters' Palette are meant to show piriform heads, but there is also the possibility that they are not composite artifacts, but rather solid wooden maces thickened at the top (Gilbert 2004: 68, fig. 5.45:5).[37] Maces

[33] The definition of carinated mace-heads encompasses here the ones referred to in research as Disc-Shaped, Conical, Conical Pear-Shaped, and Double-Ended.

[34] As far as I know, carinated mace-heads are not shown in images.

[35] In Gilbert and Ciałowicz's typology — Conical Pear-shaped Mace-heads.

[36] From these and similar images we learn about the morphology of the mace in Egypt and the way it was used during the late Predynastic and early dynastic periods. The shaft tapered from the grip-area at the base towards the top, where it joined the head. A rope or leather strap was wrapped around the grip area to prevent the hand from slipping. A knob-shaped projection secured the head and prevented it from falling off during use. There is a similarity between these maces and the ceremonial maces clad with gold-sheathing that were found in Nubia (Firth 1927: 250–208, pl. 18).

[37] Such solid maces apparently predated the composite mace with a shaft and combat-head, which came into use in the ancient Near

of this types are not known from the material culture of the period, but can be seen in a number of images, such as the wall painting in tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis, where a figure strikes three chained captives, seemingly with a solid wooden(?) mace (Quibell and Green 1902: pls. 75, 7; Köhler 2002: 501, fig. 31.2; 6; Gilbert 2004: fig. 8.2), or the ivory handle of a knife from Gebel el-Araq, which is decorated in relief on both faces (Yadin 1963: 116; Ciałowicz 1992a; Vertesalji 1992; Pittman 1996). The relief on one face of the knife-handle shows terrestrial and maritime battles in five registers. Relevant here are the images of hand-to-hand combat between warriors with shaven heads carrying weapons, and warriors with long hair, fighting mainly unarmed. The fighters use wooden(?) maces and knives, one has a mace with a globular head.[38]

- Double-sided striking implement. Two hunter-warriors carry this weapon, the leader in the right line, and the penultimate (eighth) figure in the left line. It should be noted that this is an unusual weapon, which has not been found in assemblages so far, nor in other Egyptian images of the period. Petrie (1953: 12), identified this implement as a double axe, and other scholars followed him (Yadin 1963: 119; Ciałowicz 1987: 58; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: 144), but this type of axe is not known from Egypt during the period (Baumgartel 1960: 98; Clark *et al.* 1974: 324, n. 9), or elsewhere in the ancient Near East. It is more likely that the weapon depicted belongs typologically and functionally to the maces with heads that were defined as bi-conical or double-sided (Ciałowicz 1987: 36–37, fig. 1: Type IV, pl. V:3–4, VI; Gilbert 2004: 37–39, figs. 5.1: Type 5, 5.5). Such maces were found in Tomb H23 at Mahasna (Ayrton and Loat 1911: 21, pl. 20:3), Tomb B102 at Abadiyeh (Petrie 1901: 33, pl. 5), Tomb 4601 at Badari (Brunton and Caton-Thompson 1928: 52, pls. 34:5, 52: 10–11), and Tomb 88/12 at Bahan (Reisner 1910: 126, pl. 62c 7, 8).

Lances and Javelins

These two weapons are similar in shape, and are therefore regularly misidentified both in images and in archaeological assemblages. It should be emphasized that these are two distinct types of weapons, different in their function and the way they are used, and therefore in their size and weight. The lance was used to stab the enemy in battle, and is taller than a man, with a massive and heavy head. The lance-bearer struck the opponents with great force, keeping some distance and avoiding direct contact thanks to the weapon's length. The lance was probably used also in hunting, to fell and subdue wounded animals (see discussion of the lion's hunt in the *Characteristics of the Scene* section above).

The javelin was hand-thrown, and used in battle or hunting at medium-range. Both its shaft and its head were therefore smaller and lighter than the lance (Yadin 1963: 45).[39] The craftsman who created the palette distinguished between lance and javelin, and depicted the lances with shafts taller than the figures holding them, and a massive, heavy lance-head, with raised midrib (see below). Accordingly, five figures can be identified as carrying lances. In contrast, only one figure is carrying a pair of javelins in its left hand. The javelins are distinguished from the lances in being shorter, and therefore lighter, with a much smaller point, adapted for throwing rather than stabbing.[40]

Lances and javelins are absent from the paintings of the Predynastic and early-dynastic periods (Gilbert 2004: 58–63). Their unusual depiction in the Hunters' Palette, apart from being the earliest in Egypt is, to the best of my knowledge, one of the most detailed in the early Near East in general (see n. 38). Another surprising element visible in the Hunters' Palette is the raised midrib of the points of both lances and javelins, an element which is

East during the tenth millennium, in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. They probably remained in use at the same time as the composite maces (Sebbane 2023).

[38] It seems that the craftsman who executed the relief was well acquainted with the various types of maces, and managed therefore to convey precisely composite maces with globular head next to solid, probably wooden, ones. The mace with the globular head is depicted with a shaft that extends above the head, and ends with a mushroom-shaped protrusion. No similar image was found in the dozens of known Egyptians images, early or late. It seems that the mushroom-shaped protrusion is typical of metal maces, in which the head and shaft were forged as a single unit. Similar in style are the metal maces from the Cave of the Treasure of Nahal Mishmar (Bar-Adon 1980: 40, 52–85; Sebbane 2014: 127–128, pls. 6–14). These data make it possible to consider tentatively the possibility that the warrior is armed with a metal mace similar to the Chalcolithic ones. It should be noted that the knife-handle is dated to the Naqada IId (Köhler 2002: 503; and references there), and is therefore centuries later than the Nahal Mishmar assemblage.

[39] The Ur Standard (Woolley 1934: 61–62, pls. 91–93; Yadin 1963: 133; Reade 2003: 97–100; Hamblin 2006: 49–50), and the Vultures Stele (Parrot 1948: 95, fig. 23, pl. 6; Yadin 1963: 134–135; Hansen 2003: 189–191; Hamblin 2006: 55–59), which are considered to be the most important images for the study of battle-formation, combat methods, and weapons in Mesopotamia in the second half of the third millennium, demonstrate the central role of the lance-bearers on the battlefield, as well as-the manner of the lance's use. The description of the Sumerian phalanx makes it possible to estimate the size of the lance and its weight. The lance-bearer always carries only one lance, and uses both hands in its employment. The images also show the characteristics of the javelin and the mode of its use. As a rule the chariots were armed with a quiver of light short javelins, which were thrown from the chariot during attack.

[40] The studies of the Hunters' Palette identify all items as spears (Petrie 1953: 12; Baumgartel 1960: 98; Yadin 1963: 119; Gilbert 2004: 58–59; Hendrickx *et al.* 2020: 144). This term is used by most scholars who study early weapons' assemblages in the Near East for both lances and javelins. I believe that the two should be distinguished, as they are here.

Figure 6. Lance-heads, the Kfar Monash hoard (IAA 62-168, 62-169, 62-170, 62-171).

typical to metal weapons, in this case, made of copper. This detail does not conform to the current knowledge of the material culture of the period in Egypt, where copper points of lances and javelins, as well as copper daggers, are not found. It seems that the material culture that best illustrates the images in the palette, typologically and chronologically, was discovered in somewhat later Early Bronze I assemblages in Israel. Four lance-heads with raised midrib and a tang with a hooked point were discovered in the Kfar Monash hoard,[41] that we believe should be dated to the Early Bronze Ib–beginning of the Early Bronze II (Figure 6; Hestrin and Tadmor 1963: 279–282, fig. 10:3, 11, pl. 29: A–D; Sebbane 2003: 175–177, fig. 4:1, Figure 6 herein).[42] A lance-head with raised midrib was found in Megiddo XVIII (Loud 1948: pl. 283:1), and we tend to date it to the Early Bronze Ib on the basis of the renewed excavations (Philip 1989: 80–82, fig. 58; Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2000: 25–65, 72–74; Sebbane 2003: 175–177).[43] A lance-

[41] Their length — blade and tang — is 33–66 cm, their weight 350–2050 gr. In spite of this range in measurements and weight, they form a homogeneous group, probably the product of a single industry.

[42] In Sebbane 2003 (178–179), I determined the singular and important position of the Kfar Monash hoard for the reconstruction of the metal industry in Israel and Egypt by the end of the fourth millennium, when copper implements that were unequivocally weapons first appeared, including daggers, and lance- and javelin-heads. I suggested, on typological grounds, that the working implements: the adzes and saws, as well as the mace-heads were produced in Egypt, while the weapons: lance-heads and daggers, as well as the axes, were produced in Canaan. I dated the hoard, on the basis of comparable work-implements and weapons from Egypt and Israel to the period between Naqada IIIa2 and IIIc1, or in local terms between Early Bronze Ib and the beginning of Early Bronze II.

[43] Considering the poor quality of finds in level XVIII, where segments of walls do not relate to each other stratigraphically, Philip (1989: 81–82) suggested to correlate the findspot of the lance-head in Locus 4034=NW, with the *temenos* of Temple XIX, and date it to the Early Bronze Ia. The renewed excavations of Finkelstein and Ussishkin in Megiddo exposed in the same area (Area J) impressive remains from the Early Bronze Ib in Levels J-4, J-3, J-2, which correlate

Figure 7. Javelin-head, Azor Tomb 4 (IAA 73-395).

head with raised midrib was found in the site of Nesher-Ramla, in Tomb F55, which was dated by the excavator to late Early Bronze I, i.e. to Early Bronze Ib (Avrutis 2012a: 227–232, fig. 9.1, pl. 9.1; *Id.* 2012b: 101–178, fig. 4.4, pls. 4.20–4.23).[44] A copper javelin-head with raised midrib was found in Tomb 4, Azor, which is dated to the Early Bronze Ib (Figure 7).[45] Other weapons that were found in the tomb are a piriform mace-head made of limestone, and a copper dagger with raised midrib (Ben-Tor 1975: 22–23, 27, figs. 5, 12:5–7, pls. 21:3, 22:2–3). A copper javelin-head with raised midrib was found in a karstic cave in Nahal Qanah (Gopher and Tsuk 1996: 135, pl. 33.4; Sebbane 2003: 177, fig. 4:7).[46] The assemblage was dated by the excavators to the Early Bronze Ib, however it should be noted that the pottery assemblage includes also vessels from the Early Bronze Ia (Gopher and Tsuk 1996: figs. 4.31:16, 19; 4.32). Another copper javelin-head with raised midrib that should be attributed to this group was found in Tomb L24 at Qustul, Nubia. The tomb, which was dated by the excavator to the Naqada IIIa1 period, contained also a number of Canaanite pottery juglets and fragments thereof from the Early Bronze Ib, allowing attribution of the javelin-head as well to the Canaanite culture (Williams 1986: 128, fig. 171:e, pls. 64:b, 65:b, 371, fig. 182, pl. 25; Tadmor 2002: 248–249; Sebbane 2003: 177, fig. 4:8).[47]

Boomerangs

Boomerangs are not part of the combat and hunting arsenal of the ancient Near East. In the early cultures of the Nile valley, however, they were apparently in use, but the paucity of evidence, in the material culture and images alike, makes it difficult to gauge to what extent (Petrie 1917: 36, pl. LXIX:V 8–13; *Id.* 1953: 14–15, pl. G19–20; Brunton and Caton-Thompson 1928: 14–15, 32, pls. 23:29, 25:1–2; Saleh and Sourouzian 1987: cat. no. 7; Ciałowicz 1991: 56–57, fig. 25; Gilbert 2004: 69–70, fig. 5.46). Their commonplace appearance in the Hunters' Palette, where of six hunter-warriors are equipped with boomerangs, is therefore surprising (see n. 20), and indicates that they constituted a significant component in the Predynastic combat and hunting arsenal. Two types of boomerangs can be distinguished in the palette: (1) Asymmetrical boomerang, where the arm held by the user can sometimes be twice as long as the other arm. Three figures in the left-hand line hold asymmetrical boomerangs: the second, fifth, and the ninth, who is the last in the line. The two boomerangs that were found in Tomb 5716 at Badari belong to this type (Brunton and Caton-Thompson 1928: 14–15, 32, pls. 23:29: 25:1–2). (2) Beaked or hooked boomerang. Three of the figures carry this type: the third and the

with the Early Bronze Ib Levels XIX–XVIII of the Chicago mission (Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2000: 25–65, 72–74). In view of these data, dating the lance-head from Megiddo to the Early Bronze Ib seems obvious.

[44] Length of blade and tang, 23.9 cm; length of blade, 15.1 cm; weight, 159.7 gr.

[45] Length of blade: 14 cm; length of rectangular tang: 2.8 cm; two parallel nail-holes in the lower part of the tang.

[46] This javelin-head was published as a dagger, but its shape and measurements identify it as a javelin-head. Length of blade: 18 cm, length of the rectangular tang: 4 cm, with four nail-holes, two at the top and two at the bottom.

[47] This item was published as a lance-head, but its shape and measurements identify it as a javelin-head. Length of blade: 15.6 cm; length of the rectangular tang: 4.4 cm, with two nail-holes, one each at the top and bottom.

seventh in the left-hand line, and the fourth in the right-hand line.

Beaked/hooked boomerangs were not found in Egypt so far, nor are they known in any images. Baumgartel (1960: 98) recognised them as unusual, and struggled to identify them; Ciałowicz (1987: 58–59; and further references there) considered them to be large flint knives. An unexpected insight into the function and use of the boomerangs depicted on the Hunters' Palette and in ancient Egypt in general, comes from the boomerangs that are typical to the Australian Aboriginal cultures (Davidson 1936; Jones 2004; Martellotta, Brumm and Langley 2023; and further references there). Obviously the cultural, geographical and chronological gap makes a link impossible, yet it is noteworthy that this weapon, with its range of types and functions developed and was similarly used in both cultures. A number of points are relevant here: boomerangs are multi-functional, and are used by Australian Aboriginals in hunting and combat, to start fire, for cutting, and to re-shape bone and stone tools. In addition to functional variety, and to an extent because of it, there is also typological variation. Although only two types are depicted in the Hunters' Palette, boomerangs are divided into five large groups according to outline, shape and size: 1. symmetrical boomerangs; 2. asymmetrical boomerangs; 3. beaked or hooked boomerangs; 4. returning boomerangs; 5. cross-boomerangs (Martellotta, Brumm and Langley 2023: 312–315, figs. 1–2). Symmetrical and asymmetrical boomerangs are used for hunting; beaked/hooked boomerangs are used in combat for striking; the relatively small returning boomerangs are used as children-toys, and sometimes to hunt small birds; the cross-boomerangs are not common, and used in ritual-ceremonial occasions.

Summary

The Hunters' Palette is a pictorial document that contributes exceptionally important information about daily life and the ceremonial and spiritual system of middle and late Predynastic Egypt, as it transits to the early dynastic period (Naqada IId–IIIc1). It is plausible to assume that the Egyptian craftsman who designed and executed the palette worked to a commission that detailed the required size, the subject of the imagery, the temple in which it was to be deposited, and possibly a request that the design should be on one face only. The craftsman remains nameless, but his skill and masterly ability are not in doubt. He managed to integrate 'narrative scenes'— the groups of hunter-warriors preparing for the campaign; the hunt itself, showing the chase and capture of the wild animals ; the lion's hunt and its killing — with political, religious and ideological messages. He transmits the meaning of the events, the symbols of divinity, ritual and governance, such as the Double Bull,[48] and the model of the temple/palace (Baumgartel 1960: 97–98; Tefnin 1979: 221–229; Baines 1995: 111–112, fig. 3.5; 2010: 144–145, fig. 7b; O'Connor 2002: 18–20; Hendrickx 2010: 130; 2012: 60–63). All of this he does while keeping a high level of artistic quality, which can be seen in the detailed planning of the scenes and the organization of the figures on the palette,[49] in the contrast between the technically precise depictions of the hunter-warriors, down to the details of their costume and their weapons, and the naturalistic and expressive wild animals, fleeing and being captured. All is done with meticulous attention to the quality of the smallest details of the relief. Moreover, the artist managed to put up all the figures, events, and messages, overt and covert, on one face of the palette. It is therefore necessary to consider here the suggestion that the palette is one-sided because it is the earliest in the 'historical' group, that comprises otherwise double-sided specimens, well-developed stylistically, and elaborate. Perhaps this is an indication of the unique talent of the artist, who designed a one-sided palette deliberately, and probably also under instruction from the patron who commissioned it, with the implications this design had for the way the palette was presented, and its function in the temple (O'Connor 2002). The extraordinary figurative scenes, most of them describing the organization and running of hunting campaigns, led also to discussions of their meaning and purpose — whether they reflect a specific hunt, or use the hunt as a political, religious and ideological message (Tefnin 1979; Hendrickx 2006: 743 and 2012: 60). To these deliberations it is possible to add another: do we have here a unique 'original' work, or one that is rooted in a school that reflects a well formulated worldview, for which the artist relied on a 'sample book', while using his talent to weave the scenes into an impressive, unique, image. The lion hunt, with the animal pouncing on the hunter and the vanquished lion with arrows in his body; the fleeing animals, comprising gazelle, hartebeest, hare, ostrich and deer, animals that could not be united in nature; the model of the temple/palace; the double bull; all these details strengthen the feeling that the designs were copied from a known source, and adapted by the artist when he designed this specific palette.

[48] I would like to draw attention to a rounded copper mace-head with plastic images of twin ibexes and a pair of blades from the Nahal Mishmar hoard, which is dated to the second half of the fifth millennium. The ceremonial function of this artifact, whether as a symbol of divinity or of government and authority, is not in doubt, and it has the potential of shedding light on the meaning of the double-bull in the Hunters' Palette (Bar-Adon 1980: 100–101, no. 153; Beck 1989: 42–43; Merhav 1993: 24–31; Sebbane 2016: 459–461).

[49] It should be noted that this is probably the most crowded and densely populated palette with relief decoration. There are 31 figures and a model of a building: 19 figures of hunter-warriors, six wild animals, three hunting dogs, two lions, a lioness, a double bull, and a model of a temple/palace, and yet the artist succeeded in allotting a 'personal space' to each and every figure.

As for the subject of this study — the hunter-warriors and their weapons — it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Hunters' Palette for understanding the organization of combat and the arsenal of weapons that were used in Egypt at the time, particularly when we consider the other sporadic scenes that are available at the moment, such as the wall-paintings from the tomb at Hierakonpolis, or the ivory handle of the Gebel el-Araq knife, which do not show elementary details regarding the warriors of Predynastic Egypt and their weapons (Vertesalji 1992; Pittman 1996; Ciałowicz 1998; Gilbert 2004: 84–87). The Hunters' Palette, in stark distinction, depicts two groups with their equipment and weapons. The left line on the palette numbers nine figures, and the right line apparently numbered seven.[50] We are presented with two professional, well-organized teams, each with a commander, armed with the most sophisticated weapons that were available in the Nile Valley during the second half of the fourth millennium: simple double-curbed bows and arrows with horizontal chisel-shaped heads; various types of maces, with carinated, rounded and double-sided heads; asymmetrical and beaked/hooked boomerangs; lances and javelins, their fighting heads with raised midribs, implying they were made of metal, probably copper. I believe that what we see here are professional warriors, elite groups of the ruling class, who were also in charge of the hunting campaigns. The weapons on display increase the fighting ability of the group in hand-to-hand combat as well as in mid- and long-range fighting. At the same time, they make it clear that each warrior had a particular professional role in the combat organization, since bowmen, javelin- and boomerang-throwers, each requires specialised skills that demand long practice, while lance-bearers and club-wielding warriors need a different set of skills and physical abilities for hand-to-hand combat. In conclusion, the two groups of hunter-warriors on the Hunters' Palette constitute a central component in the political and ideological messages that the palette set out to immortalize and transmit — power, authority, and government.

[50] The four figures actively involved in hunting — two using the lasso, and two in direct confrontation with the lion, are not counted.

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Chapter 42: The repertoire of motifs and their composition on ivory furniture from Samaria. An updated inventory and reflections on Egyptianizing trends in ancient Israel

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Abstract. The Samaria ivories constitute the largest assemblage of Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age that came to light in a Levantine capital; the lion's share of this corpus was found accumulated in Assyrian palaces or treasuries. Except for one small-scale object, the Samaria assemblage comprises mainly plaques and fittings that most probably decorated luxury furniture used by the kings of Israel and their entourage. Due to the predominant focus on style, little research has been dedicated to the reconstruction of Levantine ivory furniture. Based on research for a forthcoming complete catalogue and reassessment of the Samaria ivories (Suter forthcoming 1), this contribution provides an updated inventory of the represented motifs that pays special attention to their composition and, whenever possible, their assembly on furniture. It begins with an introduction on ivory furniture and concludes with reflections on the Egyptianizing trends in these and other contemporary Levantine ivory carvings.

Keywords: art, ivory carving, luxury furniture, Samaria, Israel, Egyptianizing trends.

In her brilliant contribution on the very fragmented wall paintings from Kuntillet ʻAjrud, Tallay Ornan argued that their imagery belonged to a royal context, concluding that they can be seen as "a cracked and dusty mirror reflecting the splendor of the lost palace of the Israelite kings at Samaria" (Ornan 2016: 22). The same can be said of the similarly fragmented assemblage of ivory carvings excavated at Samaria, which share a number of motifs with the wall paintings from Kuntillet ʻAjrud, as Tallay pointed out.

At the conference in Tallay and Ilan Sharon's honour in October 2021, I presented an updated review of the ivories' imagery, focusing on composition and possible assembly on furniture. Nearly a century after their discovery, there is much more and better researched comparative material available, especially thanks to the nearly complete publication of the Nimrud ivories and the recent publication of both the legally and illegally excavated ivories from Arslan Tash. Comparison with this material allows us to identify even very fragmented parts of design, attribute them to a particular motif, and get an idea of how the original piece might have looked like. This, however, requires an inspection of many, often fragmented pieces on either side, partly due to the large variation in Levantine Iron Age ivory carvings, but also because often numerous fragments, each depicting different parts of the design, can be attributed to a set of plaques that presumably decorated the same piece of furniture.

In a written contribution such as this, it is impossible to adequately illustrate what I showed at the conference with the support of a PowerPoint presentation of many tableaux full of ivory carvings; this will have to wait for the complete publication of the Samaria ivories. Here I offer a rather bare inventory of the imagery and its composition with reference to *comparanda* and only a handful of illustrations. This central part is preceded by an introduction on the Samaria assemblage and ivory furniture, and followed by reflections on the interpretation of the Egyptianizing features in this assemblage within the larger context of Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age. It is my great pleasure to dedicate this paper to my dear colleague and old friend Tali.

The Samaria assemblage and ivory furniture

The wide dispersion of the thousands of Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age, with the vast majority retrieved from Nimrud, ancient Kalhu, the capital of Assyria in the 9th to the 7th century BCE, was largely a function of Assyrian imperial policies and their aftermath. Despite its utter fragmentation, the assemblage from Samaria is the largest and richest assemblage from a Levantine site. This may be due to the fact that Samaria became the seat of an Assyrian governor and may, therefore, not have been destroyed by the Assyrians when they annexed the kingdom of Israel. Although the recent symposium on the last days of Israel has not reached unanimous

conclusions (Hasegawa 2018), it has demonstrated that there is neither textual nor archaeological evidence for a physical destruction of Samaria. The disassembled, fragmented condition of the Samaria ivories may have been caused by later destructions, since most of them were found in Hellenistic or Roman debris (Tappy 2006).

In terms of object types, the Samaria assemblage comprises mainly plaques and some fittings, all of which could have been applied to furniture, even if one cannot entirely exclude the possibility that some might have been applied to small-scale objects, such as caskets. The only indisputable small-scale object is the unique handle of a now lost dagger ending in a lion's head carved in the round (Reisner *et al.* 1924: pl. 56c).

There can be no doubt that pieces of ivory elaborately carved with figurative imagery, some with part of the design inlaid with colorful glass, painted in colors and/or overlaid with gold foil, were made for display and consumption by royals and their entourage (Feldman 2015a). The majority of Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age come from palatial contexts, even if many contexts are secondary. With their expansion to the west, the Assyrian kings accumulated these objects in their palaces and treasuries, thus stripping the Levantine kings off their prestige objects. Both the Hebrew Bible and late Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions from Tiglath-pileser III to Esarhaddon speak metaphorically of palaces of ivory (Uehlinger 2000: 102–105), perhaps a Levantine topos.

The most frequently mentioned objects of ivory that Assyrian kings acquired from defeated Levantine kings are thrones and couches (Bagg 2011: 146–147). In booty or tribute lists, both raw ivory and ivory artifacts generally feature after precious metals, usually the first item on the list, and before precious woods and many other items. Precisely ivory thrones and couches are also mentioned in the Hebrew Bible: Solomon's throne (1 Kings 10:18–20), and beds and couches in the prophet Amos' condemnation of the luxurious lifestyle at Jeroboam II's court (Amos 6:4). That thrones and couches were reserved for kings and their entourage is not only suggested by textual sources, but also by pictorial representations (Gruber 2004: 62–72, 91–95).

Unfortunately, this furniture has come down to us disassembled and dispersed, as most of it was found not only in secondary contexts, but also in palaces that were destroyed, looted, and vandalized in antiquity. Rare exceptions are the four reconstructed pieces of furniture from Tomb 79 at Salamis on Cyprus – a bed, two chairs, and a footrest – (Karageorghis 1974) and the backrests found stacked in Room SW7 of Fort Shalmaneser at Nimrud (Mallowan and Herrmann 1974). These finds, however, can serve as models for reconstructing Levantine furniture only with reservations, since Bed A and Chair Gamma appear to have been assembled of recycled pieces (Feldman 2014: 153–160), while the SW7 backrests form an unusually homogeneous group that differs from most other Levantine ivory carvings in imagery and style.

Nevertheless, they give a general idea of how ivory furniture might have looked like. They show, for example, that elaborate ivory carvings were applied to the headboard and backrests of beds or couches and thrones or chairs, respectively, and combined with plain veneering in such a manner that the entire piece of furniture was covered in ivory. This must be the reason why textual sources often speak of furniture made of ivory rather than ivory-decorated wooden furniture. In older excavations, plain ivory veneers were often discarded without proper recording.[1] The early excavations at Samaria are an exception in this respect: about half of the material I found in museum storage consists of plain pieces.

The use of visual representations of furniture for the location of actual ivory carvings on furniture is also limited. First, depictions are one-dimensional: the chairs depicted on some SW7 ivory panels, for example, are seen in profile, providing information on their seat and legs, but not on the decoration of their backs. Second, the usually monochrome representations carved in stone, metal or ivory cannot represent the materials of which the furniture was made. Third, although depictions give us an idea of the types of furniture used in diverse contexts and their general shapes, they are rarely detailed enough for the recognition of individual plaques with figurative imagery. There are, however, some exceptions as, for example, the fragmentary orthostat of Barrakib from Zincirli showing him in banquet on an elaborate Levantine throne, the visible side of which includes a molded stretcher, three rows of what appear to be six simplified stylized palms, and a bunch of flowers spreading out from a semicircle in the arched top (Voos 1985: fig. 14–15); similar stretchers and stylized palms made of ivory have been found at various sites (e.g., AT 192–203), though stylized palms were also made of wood, as finds from Jerusalem show (Naeh 2015: 84–85).

So far, hardly any research has been dedicated to the reconstruction of ivory furniture; notable exceptions are an article by Georgina Herrmann (1996) and an unpublished dissertation by Claudia Gruber (2004). This neglect cannot be ascribed only to the precarious find circumstances, as also the imagery and its composition have received little attention since Richard Barnett's Nimrud Catalogue (1957), many of

[1] See, for example, Reade in Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013: 351–352, for Nimrud; Fontan and Affanni 2018: 22–24, for Arslan Tash.

whose interpretations are outdated (Suter 2011: 221). It has been the domineering focus on style in the study of Levantine ivory carvings that impeded a fuller exploration of other aspects. Due to their extremely precarious condition, the Samaria ivories cannot contribute to a concrete reconstruction of furniture. Yet, the composition of their imagery, viewed together with better-preserved *comparanda*, point to some possibilities regarding the original assembly of pieces. Hence the following inventory of motifs pays special attention to composition and considers, whenever possible, the potential location of the respective plaques and fittings on furniture.

Inventory of motifs and their composition

With regard to the wall paintings from Kuntillet ʻAjrud, Tallay Ornan (2016) distinguished two groups of imagery: one concerned with activities of the king and his entourage, the other of a beneficial and protective nature "essential for the protection and well-being of the king and his dynasty" (Ornan 2016: 22). The former depicts military campaigns, hunts, and court ceremonies, the latter supernatural beings, suckling cows, grazing and browsing ungulates, lotus garlands, and guilloche bands. The imagery on the ivory furniture from Samaria pertains mainly to Ornan's more allusive second group. This should not come as a surprise in view of the difference in image carriers: an official royal building versus luxury goods.

Levantine ivory carvings represent generic images celebrating royal power and ideals (Suter 2011), an observation similarly made by Francesca Onnis (2009, 2014) with regard to metal bowls, the other large body of Iron Age Levantine luxury art. As royal ideology was based on the belief that the king was the gods' representative on earth, it involved religious concepts. Most motifs revive the repertoire of the Late Bronze Age, which is in itself complex, comprising motifs of indigenous tradition, some quoting the foreign, and many that were shared in the international networks of Late Bronze Age palaces (Feldman 2002, 2015b). The following inventory starts with scenes involving anthropomorphic and supernatural figures, followed by animal imagery, discrete floral motifs, and geometric designs.

Motifs involving anthropomorphic and supernatural figures

Only two scenes presumably depicted activities of the king and his entourage: a banquet and possible chariot hunts, of which only two or three fragments have survived. Both motifs are extremely rare, not only in the assemblage of Samaria, but on Iron Age Levantine ivory carvings in general.

The fragmentary **banquet scene** (EIS pl. 11:1) stands in an indigenous Levantine tradition. One can imagine the enthroned figure with a cup in its right hand and a lotus flower in the other. The attendant behind the throne wears the same hairstyle as his counterparts on Late Bronze Age antecedents (e.g., Loud 1939: no. 2; Fischer 2011: pl. 1), whereas the enthroned figure's headgear, garment, and throne are paralleled on Iron Age ivories: a fragmentary Egyptian-style head cloth (e.g., EIS pl. 5: 3), a garment with a beaded seam, and a variation of the *ḥwt* -throne (e.g., IN 7 165). The surviving plaque most likely constituted the left end of a larger scene that, by analogy with other Iron Age banquet scenes, might have included a food-laden table in front of the banqueter with one or two servants at its other end, a musical performance, men carrying provisions, perhaps even a slaughter scene.[2]

The two fragments that might have belonged to **chariot hunt scenes** are the small head of an apparently harnessed equid (EIS pl. 13:7), and a fragment on which the Crowfoots (1938: 22) saw a piece of harness, but the imagery of which is difficult to identify (EIS pl. 8: 4).[3] Although a horse-drawn chariot could theoretically have belonged to a military scene, I am excluding this possibility, since no military scenes are depicted on Levantine ivory carvings of the Iron Age. A chariot hunt might have stretched across a backrest or headboard, as it does on one of the backrests from Fort Shalmaneser's Room SW7 (IN 3 1). The same applies to an extended banquet scene.

Twenty fragments carved in solid relief or openwork can be identified as parts of **balustraded windows with or without a female figure** looking out of it. They belonged to at least five sets (Suter 2023: 533–534, Sets 32–36). The only plaque that is nearly complete depicts a female with an Egyptian-type wig at a window with the usual triply recessed frame and a balustrade of papyrus stalks (EIS pl. 13:2). Most other fragments belonged to the more common windows with a balustrade of columns with volute capitals (EIS fig. 4). Two exemplars in solid relief were carved out of a recycled, oblong cloisonné plaque that depicted Horus Eyes flanking a *djed*-column, thus providing their format, which does not seem to allow space for a female head (Suter 2019), unless the balustrade was very low. A small fragment depicting a papyrus blossom below a bar (EIS pl. 17:13) probably formed part of an unframed, empty window with a balustrade of papyrus flowers alternating with buds, just like three sets of plaques from Arslan Tash (AT 235–241).

[2] For a detailed discussion of this plaque's imagery, see Suter 2022.
[3] For harnessed equids in chariot hunts, see, e.g., Barnett 1957: no. S.1 or IN 4 657.

Figure 1. Plaque depicting sphinx striding over defeated Asian (photo author).

The plaques depicting the self-contained window motif are more or less square in shape. They may have decorated the top of furniture legs as suggested by the similar, though Assyrianized, motif on the couch on which Assurbanipal celebrates his victory over Elam in the famous garden scene on a relief in his palace at Nineveh (Barnett 1976: pl. LXIV; Albenda 1994). The furniture legs would have been square in section and could thus have held up to four plaques each.[4]

Four small fragments carved in different techniques may have belonged to a **hero combatting a griffin or lion**, although not enough is preserved to corroborate this identification. The stick-like object diagonally across the shoulder of a youth wearing an Egyptian-style wig and a sun disk on his head on the best-preserved fragment could have been part of the spear with which he stabbed the creature (EIS pl. 11:6), much like the equally coiffured youth stabbing a griffin on an openwork cloisonné plaque from Nimrud (IN 4 1051). Such two-figure groups could be combined with similar two-figure groups as, for example, the griffin slayer combined with a lion slayer on two curved plaques of the same set from Nimrud (IN 4 78–79).

Another two-figure group, the iconic Egyptian motif of the **smiting pharaoh,** is depicted on a relatively well-preserved plaque carved in champlevé (EIS pl. 14:1), and a few small fragments that may have belonged to two other plaques of the same set. This motif is otherwise attested only once more on a Levantine ivory carving, namely a unique cylinder carved in cloisonné (IN 6 258), which combines it with another two-figure group, a royal figure with Asiatic features holding a defeated enemy on his arm, and an antithetically composed scene of a pair of goddesses spreading their wings to protect their now lost protégé in the center, possibly an infant Horus (Kitchen in Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009: 199).

The last two-figure group depicts another Egyptian motif, the **pharaoh in the guise of a sphinx striding over a defeated enemy** on a fragment carved in champlevé (EIS pl. 14.7) and a set of three plaques carved in solid cloisonné (EIS pls. 7:8 + 10:3–4, 10:5, 13:8), one of which is a join of three fragments housed in three different institutions (Figure 1). This two-figure group could be arranged in a row repeating several times the same motif (e.g., IN 4 656, 1111, 1113). Although the last two motifs are military in nature, I am inclined to view them as scenes of a heroic past with which the royal audience of the Iron Age identified rather than activities of a Levantine king of the Iron Age.

More frequent at Samaria and elsewhere than the scenes discussed so far are scenes that adopted imagery of religious or cosmic aspects of Egyptian royal ideology.[5] Most of them are symmetrically arranged in antithetical compositions depicting one or more pairs of identical figures or creatures flanking a central figure or element. This composition of the imagery conveyed cosmic harmony.

[4] For a more detailed discussion of this motif, see Suter 2023: 519–520.

[5] On this Egyptianizing imagery, see Kitchen in Herrmann 1986: 37–42, and Hawkes 1981.

Some of the best-preserved pieces from Samaria belong to the strongly Egyptianizing scenes carved in solid cloisonné on single plaques or several sectional plaques that seamlessly combined into one. One fragmentary plaque depicted two pairs of **Horus Eyes flanking a papyrus field** (EIS pl. 3:2), another – a pair of **Horus Eyes flanking a *djed*-column** (EIS pl. 12:11; Suter 2019: fig. 3, 9a). The fragment with parts of two ***Heh*-figures** (EIS pl. 2:2) to the right probably formed part of a similar antithetical composition as the one that stretches across the headboard of Salamis' Bed A, which includes three pairs of *Heh*-figures flanking a stylized tree, with a pair of stylized trees between the last and the other two figures (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXVII). A tiny fragment with parts of an arching palm branch of such a scene next to the foot of a cartouche indicates that the plaque to which it belonged depicted ***Heh*-figures flanking a cartouche**.

A complete, slightly trapezoidal plaque made of two sections depicts a pair of **kneeling, winged goddesses** with a lotus flower in each hand **flanking a *djed*-column** (EIS pl. 3:1). Only one section has survived of another equally shaped and carved plaque that depicted a pair of **crouching falcon-headed gods flanking an infant Horus on the lotus**, while holding a *Maat*-figurine in a *neb*-basket in one hand and gesturing adoration with the other (EIS pl. 1:2). Three tiny, only partly published fragments (EIS pl. 13:9) may have belonged to a **sun barge scene** as depicted on some plaques from Nimrud (IN 4 989–993). Two not yet published fragments must have belonged to a plaque depicting a **lioness suckling her young** in a papyrus field (Figure 2a), just like a plaque from Nimrud made of two horizontal sections (Figure 2b = IN 4 1015–1016); the Samaria exemplar has a plain bottom edge that cuts straight through the body of the lioness, indicating that the plaque was made of two similar sections as the one from Nimrud.

Another sectional plaque with a plain left edge depicts a **female figure holding a flail** to the left (EIS pl. 2:1), which finds a very close parallel at Nimrud in terms of iconographic details, carving technique, and plaque type (IN 4 1032). Both plaques may have been combined with their mirror image **to flank a pharaoh figure** in the middle, as on three-sided furniture elements (e.g., IN 4 1043). Three small fragments may have belonged to similar scenes. The hand holding an *udjat*-eye on a *neb*-basket (EIS pl. 13:13) recalls the pair of male figures flanking a mummified Osiris on a plaque from Nimrud (IN 4 999+, see Herrmann and Laidlaw 2013: fig. 2c) or the pair of female figures flanking a pharaoh-like figure on the three-sided furniture element from Zincirli (von Luschan and Andrae 1943: pl. 67a–c); on both pieces the flanking figures are holding an *udjat*-eye in one hand. The position of the arm on another cloisonné fragment (EIS pl. 12:14) is the same as is that of the pharaoh figure on the latter, while the inlaid border of the figure's dress is the same as that worn by the flanking males on the former. The same type of dress was worn by a larger figure of which only part of the lower leg and dress survives on a fragment that was reworked to be used as an awl (EIS pl. 12:10).

Moving to the less strongly Egyptianizing scenes, there are many fragments of **winged figures** – only some of them published – carved in different techniques: openwork cloisonné (EIS pls. 4:1, 7:1), champlevé (EIS pls. 14:2, 14:8, 14:10), solid relief (EIS pls. 4:2, 4:3, 4:5), and plain openwork (EIS pl. 4:4). Although these fragments hardly ever add up to a plaque, what is preserved, together with *comparanda* from other sites,

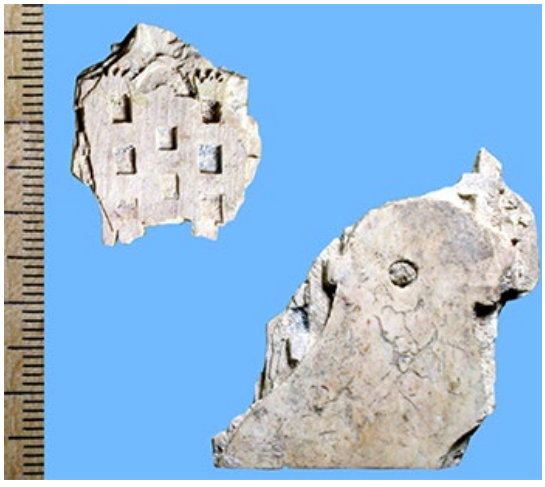

Figure 2a. Two plaque fragments, possibly of the same motif as Fig. 2b (photo author).

Figure 2b. Plaque from Nimrud depicting lioness suckling her young in a papyrus field, 11.2 cm high (after Herrmann 1986: pl. 263).

suggests that a plaque would have depicted a single figure or half of an antithetical scene. Such protective figures with wings are predestined to have flanked a central figure or element, which, when preserved, was a lion aegis (e.g., IN 7 61) or a stylized tree (e.g., IN 4 49). They often hold flowers, sometimes also a flower in one hand and an *uraeus* in the other (EIS pl. 13:4, compare, e.g., IN 4 49). A comparatively large openwork **lion aegis**, its now-lost face once separately made (Reisner *et al.* 1924: pl. 66h1, compare IN 7 29), might have formed the central element flanked by a pair of large winged figures; alternatively it might have topped a papyrus field (e.g., IN 4 189).

Some of the better-preserved **figures without wings**, carved in champlevé or solid relief, include standing or kneeling males gesturing adoration (e.g., EIS pls. 12:1, 12:18, 14:11) and males touching a stylized tree (e.g., EIS pl. 14:9, compare IN 4 34–36). Both figures were probably arranged in antithetical pairs, the latter obviously around a stylized tree, the former around a central figure or element, which in one case apparently was a winged creature of which only a fragmentary wing remains (EIS pl. 14:11 and IN 4 33). The damaged female figure on a yet unpublished fragment, which either held a flower (e.g., IN 4 70) or touched a papyrus stalk on either side (e.g., IN 4 57–66) presents an exception to the predominant antithetical composition: such a figure would have been arranged in a row with identical ones, which in the latter case would have resulted in the rare motif of a circle of dancing women, similar to the one depicted on a pyxis from Ur (Wicke 2008: no. Ur.1).

The most frequent antithetical scene depicts a pair of **sphinxes flanking a stylized tree**. This popular motif, which occurs in all carving techniques and different styles (e.g., EIS pls. 5:1–3, 6:2, 7:3, 7:12–14, 14:5–6), could be expanded into a row of repeating pairs back to back as, for example, the three pairs on another strip that stretched across the headboard of Salamis' Bed A (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXVII). The rare motif of a pair of **seated sphinxes flanking a cartouche** (e.g., IN 4 642) is attested at Samaria once on a fragmentary, unpublished plaque.

Other antithetically arranged creatures are pairs of **griffins browsing on a stylized tree**, of which only small fragments survive (e.g., EIS pl. 14:4, compare IN 4 1171, and 617). The large **winged *uraeus*** in profile on an openwork plaque (Figure 3 = Reisner *et al.* 1924: pl. 56f), which is attested in this form only at Samaria, was probably also paired and arranged around a central element, as the outstretched wings suggest. The two wingless, **rearing-up *uraei***, on the other hand, would have been arranged in a row with identical *uraei* to form a crowning element: the small, yet unpublished one, carved in openwork probably atop a plaque with a figurative scene (e.g., IN 7 85); the other larger one carved in the round (EIS pl. 22:2) possibly atop a piece of furniture in parallel to the row of 17 lotus flowers in the round on the headboard of Bed A from Salamis (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXVI).

Figure 3. Plaque depicting winged uraeus (photo author).

Animal Imagery

In contrast to the often symmetrically composed figurative scenes, animals are either depicted in dynamic combats or peaceful rows. There are at least three **animal combat scenes**, one carved in openwork (EIS pl. 10:1–2), the others in solid relief with one group of fragments burnt black (EIS pls. 8:1–3, 8:5) and the other only lightly burnt (EIS pls. 7:4?, 12:7). While the openwork plaque depicted distinct groups of lions attacking bulls, the relief ones depicted chaotically entangled lions, bulls, and griffins, the dense composition of which hampers a reconstruction. There are many more fragments of the group burnt black and a few of the other relief group. Animal combat scenes could extend over the entire width of a backrest or other part of furniture; an incomplete strip from Nimrud (IN 5 308), for example, measures 1 m in length.

Rows of animals, usually facing the same direction, have survived only in very fragmentary state. They depicted cows, bulls, and stags in solid relief and openwork, and once in incision. **Cows** are seen **suckling their young** (e.g., EIS pl. 10:7, compare, e.g., IN 4 702). Some legs of bovines carved in solid relief may have belonged to either suckling cows or a row of **striding bulls** (e.g., EIS pl. 10:6, compare, e.g., IN 4 709). The hoofs surviving on a curved guilloche band carved in low relief on an unpublished fragment (Figure 4a) probably belonged to bulls carved in openwork in parallel to a cylindrical veneer from Nimrud with five bulls in a row on a guilloche band (Figure 4b = IN 6 275); this and similar cylindrical veneers may have covered furniture legs (Herrmann 1996: 160–162). Another unpublished piece preserves a three-dimensional hoof on a small platform, recalling an openwork bull with three-dimensional legs on a similar platform from Nimrud (Mallowan 1966: fig. 176). While the Samaria exemplar exhibits a dowel hole in the center of the platform's bottom, the Nimrud exemplar has a tenon each on the platform's bottom and the highest point of the bull's back, thus suggesting that these bulls were also incorporated into furniture. Parts of two **grazing stags**, one behind the other, are preserved on a fragment carved in solid relief (EIS pl. 10:8). Other yet unpublished fragments only preserve feet of striding ungulates carved in solid relief, openwork or incision.

Figure 4a. Curved plaque with remains of hoofs, probably part of a veneer like Fig. 4b (photo author).

Figure 4b. Cylindrical veneer from Nimrud with five bulls striding on a guilloche band, 12.2 cm in diameter (after Herrmann & Laidlaw 2009: pl. 89).

Caprines are less frequently depicted. At Samaria, four fragmentary goats or caprines are carved in solid relief (EIS pl. 13:6, 13:10, 13:12), and one, of which only part of a bent leg survives, in openwork. Their posture suggests that they were standing on their hind legs to browse on a tree. These caprines were probably arranged in an antithetical composition similar to the pair of griffins browsing on a stylized tree, yet with their body practically upright as, for example, the pair of ibexes on a tall, cylindrical pyxis from Nimrud (IN 7 T129).

Several fragments of **swimming fish** (EIS pl. 13:3) apparently belonged to a unique underwater scene carved in low relief.

Unless involved in combat with other creatures or heroes, lions occur isolated and are rendered either seated or couchant. Each of a set of three complete sectional plaques depicts the hind-part of a **seated lion** against an inlaid background (EIS pl. 9: 2–4); three more plaques would have been required to complete the figure. A pair of nearly complete **couchant lions** and fragments of others are carved in the round (EIS pl. 9:1). The nearly complete ones exhibit rectangular mortises cut into the center of both the top and the bottom of the hollow body, while two dowel holes are pierced through each side, one in the mane, the other behind the forelegs. These lions were thus attached to another object by two tenons on top and bottom, which were secured in place by dowels. Similar lions have been found at other sites (e.g., IN 4 1381, 1384 1385, 7 721–722; von Luschan and Andrae 1943: pls. 64–65; Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005: nos. T.1–3). As Brigitte Freyer-Schauenburg (1966: 86–87) suggested, such lions might have been inserted into furniture legs, like those seen between wreaths on the legs of Assurbanipal's couch (Barnett 1976: pl. LXIV; Albenda 1994). Note that the stretcher of this couch, which depicts pairs of lions attacking one another, would have been a potential location for animal combats or animal rows on Levantine furniture.

Floral Motifs

As the review of imagery has shown so far, floral motifs occur in a number of figurative scenes: stylized trees or plants often constitute the central element of an antithetically composed scene; plants can also form the background of a motif as, for example, the above-mentioned papyrus field in which the lioness suckles

her young; and animals graze or browse on them. In addition, there are discrete floral motifs. Attested at Samaria are rosettes, garlands, stylized palms, and a pattern of so-called Phoenician palmettes. Most of them occur on many fragments that formed part of sets.

Rosettes appear in different forms. A plaque fragment carved in low relief preserves part of a large encircled **rosette on a stalk**, which has an exact counterpart in a sectional plaque from Nimrud (IN 4 876). The latter suggests a continuation of the design, which might have been a bouquet of such rosettes, based on an unpublished fragment from Samaria that preserves part of two encircled rosettes next to each other, which are of the same size and carving as the rosette on a stalk. **Rows of rosettes**, some encircled, are incised on long narrow strips, which probably served as border bands (EIS pl. 21:6, fig. 11b–d); there are five sets of simple rosette rows and nine of encircled rosette rows. A few plaque fragments with rows of square or round cavities may have held polychromatic glass tiles or disks depicting rosettes (e.g., EIS frontispiece 2:5, 2:10), thus resulting in similar, yet inlaid border bands.[6] About 120 fragments preserve parts of an incised **net-like pattern of rosettes** (EIS pl. 21:8, fig. 13), like that on a plaque from Nimrud (IN 6 326) and some metal bowls (e.g., Onnis 2009: 146 fig. 8).[7] **Single rosettes** incised on hemispherical bosses (EIS pl. 23:1) or carved in the round (EIS pl. 23:2) might have served as decorative disguise of joints on furniture as did, for example, the hemispherical bosses on the top and bottom border bands of the so-called Mona Lisa (IN 6 348); there are seven exemplars of the first type and ten sets of the second.

Two long strips and many fragments depict lotus **garlands** (EIS pls. 16:1–2, 16:7); seven sets are carved in low relief, two small fragments in higher relief. In the former case, the outline of their design could be gilded (EIS pl. 16:2). The longest strip was over 40 cm long. These long strips may have veneered structural parts of furniture, such as rails or stretchers, although one cannot exclude that they stretched across a backrest or headboard, together with strips of figurative scenes, like the floral strip on the headboard of Salamis' Bed A (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXVII). Garlands also decorate a semicircular plaque (EIS pl. 15:1) and border bands carved in champlevé (EIS pls. 15:2–5, 8–9) or incision. In addition to lotus flowers, they can include lilies and palmettes.

Crowfoot and Crowfoot (1938: 34) found "no evidence to show whether the (garlands') flowers opened upwards or downwards on the ivories;" they illustrated some of them upwards, but others downwards (EIS pls. 15–16). The one multi-registered champlevé plaque from Samaria (EIS pl. 14:3) and some plaques from Nimrud carved in solid relief or champlevé (e.g., IN 4 212–229, 1171–1172, 1179–1180), all of which combine figurative motifs with garland borders, suggest the upward orientation. This is corroborated by the thematic context of the imagery depicted on ivory carvings, motifs beneficial to kingship, since the downwards orientation signified death as, for example, on Ahiram's sarcophagus (Ziffer 2005: 155).

Stylized palms (Figure 5) are carved on at least 100 individual openwork plaques, which vary in size and minute iconographical details (EIS pls. 18–20, figs. 5, 8); there are at least nine sets extant. This motif was apparently arranged in horizontal rows, as suggested by plaques from other sites that depict a continuous frieze of several of them (e.g., IN 3 108–109; Bunnens 1997: nos. 8–10, figs. 11–14), and by the already mentioned three rows of six palms each on the visible side of Barrakib's throne. His throne would thus have comprised 36 palms. An unpublished fragment of such a palm is made of blue glass.

Figure 5. Openwork plaque depicting a stylized palm (photo author).

[6] Discussing possible functions of such glass inlays, John Curtis (1999: 64) pointed to some ivory carvings with rectangular cavities from Nimrud, all of which are cylindrical veneers in contrast to the flat plaque fragments from Samaria.

[7] A similar incised pattern, though without a central dot, also occurs on bases of ivory pyxides (Barnett 1957: nos. S.36q, S.38; IN 6 233) and a flask (IN 6 236).

The pattern of **superimposed Phoenician palmettes** is carved on vertical strips, on which a complete exemplar alternates with two halves (EIS pl. 21:4–5, fig. 10); such strips may have veneered stiles of backrests or served as border bands. In larger scale, the motif also occurs on fragments that may have formed a set with the complete square plaque depicting a rudimentary **stylized tree** (EIS pl. 21:3); this format would have been suitable for the top of furniture legs, like the similarly-sized plaques with the window motif. Stylized trees or parts thereof are carved in all techniques (e.g., EIS pls. 16:3–4, 17:4, 17:6, 21:2), and also occur on two glass tiles (EIS pl. 24:4), and a yet unpublished golden overlay. Whether fragmentary exemplars once belonged to the floral background of a figurative scene or a separate floral plaque, which may have been combined with a pair of figures to form an antithetically composed scene, cannot be determined in most cases. If the broken relief plaque with a unique depiction of at least five **superimposed stylized trees** (EIS pl. 21:1) is only missing its right edge frame, it may have veneered a backrest's stile as suggested for the vertical strips with superimposed Phoenician palmettes. The openwork plaque in the shape of a pair of out-curving volutes issuing from a triangle (EIS pl. 22:1) is another rare motif with two parallels only (IN 4 784; Karageorghis 1974: pl. LV:513). This element of stylized trees, which can be identified as the stylized rendering of a new shoot on the trunk of a date palm, is the origin of the **volute capital** (Franklin 2011). The 18.4 cm wide ivory plaque and its counterparts might have topped legs of tables, such as the banqueter's dining table with column-shaped legs on a stone pyxis recently found at Tell Tayinat (Osborne 2021: fig. 4.1).

Geometric Designs

With few exceptions, geometric designs are incised. Most of them occur on narrow strips that apparently served as border bands. They include **guilloches** (EIS pl. 21:7, fig. 12); **rows of concentric circles** (as, e.g., IN 6 369); a unique **band of parallel, recessed zigzags** in low relief; and the fragment of a **pattern of inlaid rectangles**, which is attested as a border of some cloisonné plaques from Nimrud (e.g., IN 4 1015–1016, 1260). Samaria produced many more fragments of double guilloches (c. 90) than simple guilloches (4), which are more common at other sites; the latter were once painted in different colors, like their counterparts from other sites (e.g., AT 246–255).

Another popular geometric design consists of a **lattice of dotted diamonds, squares or triangles**; the two best-preserved fragments with such a design are a framed strip (EIS pl. 21:9, fig. 14a) and a unique large plaque, the center of which probably depicted **concentric rectangles** (EIS pl. 21:10), a motif that occurs separately on three small plaques and similar ones from a number of other sites (e.g., IN 4 1248–1249). A small fragment preserves a **pattern of scales**, doubly-outlined and with a central dot (EIS fig. 15); a similarly sized, simpler scale pattern is incised on the thin sheet of gold that overlaid the top rail of the backrest on Salamis' Chair Gamma (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXI, CCXL). The ca. 20 scales of gold foil from Samaria (EIS pl. 24:1) are of about the same size as those on the plaque fragment; these individually made scales perhaps overlaid a pattern in which only every other scale was gilded. Three fragments depict part of an **unparalleled dotted design** (EIS fig. 14d), which remains enigmatic.

Plain hemispherical bosses (EIS pl. 23:3), of which there are 10 complete or nearly complete exemplars and many more fragmentary ones, must have served the same purpose as the above-mentioned rosette bosses. In addition, there are about 30 **disk-shaped pieces**, ranging in diameter from 0.7–4.83 cm and in thickness from 0.15–0.55cm. They recall the disks of different sizes inlaid in a single row along the frame and legs of the wooden Chair Delta and its footstool from Salamis (Karageorghis 1974: pl. LXIV).

Egyptianizing trends, the Phoenicians, and art in Ancient Israel[8]

Egyptianizing trends predominate the largest and most diverse group of imagery represented at Samaria, the figurative scenes involving anthropomorphic and supernatural figures. Most of these scenes depict Egyptian-type royal and divine figures, usually in antithetical compositions, which pertain to the king's role in cosmic order, evoking stability, prosperity, and regeneration. Yet, even motifs that do not originate in Egypt include Egyptianizing realia. To give some examples, the enthroned figure in the banquet scene of Levantine tradition wears an Egyptian-style headcloth and sits on an Egyptianizing throne; the potential griffin or lion slayer, motifs of Eastern Mediterranean or Mesopotamian origin, respectively, wears an Egyptian-style wig and a sun disk on his head; the woman at the window, a motif that may have had a Late Bronze Age Cypriote origin (Caubet in press), also wears an Egyptian-style wig.

Other motifs of Near Eastern origin, which also evoked stability and prosperity provided by the king through his special relation with the gods, are not Egyptianizing as they do not involve anthropomorphic figures. They include animal combats; peacefully grazing or browsing animals; some discrete floral motifs, such as stylized palms; and even geometric designs, such as the guilloche signifying permanently running water

[8] I thank Marian Feldman for reading and approving of this part of my paper after I submitted it in September 2022.

(Ornan 2016: 16), or patterns of diamonds, triangles or scales that imitate the pattern on trunks of palm trees caused by the cut-off fronds of previous years' shoots (Franklin 2011: 132).[9]

As Egyptianizing trends have long been associated with the Phoenicians, the Samaria ivories have been – and often still are – taken as Phoenician imports to Israel and dated to the first half of the 9th century BCE, namely to the reign of Ahab (873–852 BCE), because he was married to Jezebel, the daughter of the Tyrian king Ittobaal I. However, the Egyptianizing trends may instead point to a later development in Levantine ivory carving of the early Iron Age (Feldman 2014: 39, 77–78, 179; Suter 2015). There are indications that the differences between the originally conceived regional styles – North Syrian, Phoenician, and South Syrian – were related more to time than geography. Thus I have suggested using the objective terms Levantine-1/2/3 for them (Suter in press, and forthcoming 2). Egyptianizing trends in the Levant fluctuated over time. It appears that the pressure caused by the Assyrian expansion triggered a re-orientation towards Egypt in artistic practices of the late 9th and especially 8th century BCE. If correctly construed, the Samaria ivories, which do not comprise any Levantine-1 pieces, would then largely date to the 8th century BCE and thus fall into the floruit of Israel under the long reign of Jeroboam II (788–747 BCE).[10]

This new perspective questions the exclusive association of Egyptianizing features with the Phoenicians. In a contribution on the art of Palestine during Iron Age II published more than twenty years ago, Pirhiya Beck (2000: 177) already noted, "the common notion according to which every Egyptianized motif should automatically be derived from Phoenicia is not borne out by the evidence." More recent research has scrutinized the basis on which works of art are attributed to Phoenician artists. A good example is Rebecca Martin's (2017) study on the relationship between Phoenician and ancient Greek art, which challenges essentialist notions of East and West that created modern fictions of identity, and argues that a Phoenician identity did not emerge in art until the Achaemenid period. In a similar vein, other scholars have questioned Phoenician identity in general (Vella 2014; Quinn 2017). After some time of neglect, the Phoenicians have reappeared as a subject of research in the context of postcolonial studies.

In reaction to this critical questioning, Carolina López-Ruiz (2021) set out to rehabilitate the Phoenicians as "makers" of the Mediterranean. Her book is of a remarkably broad breath, overarching usually separately studied geographical regions and disciplines – classical philology, Near Eastern and Mediterranean archaeology and art history – in search of textual and archaeological traces of Phoenicians in the entire Mediterranean. It certainly deserves praise for looking at a comprehensive picture and providing food for thought. At the same time, it is tendentious in promoting a Phoenician supremacy, uncritical with regard to "the conflation of people, language, place, and style, all bound up in a problematic Greek term" (Feldman 2014: 179). In the following, I point out what I perceive as problematic in this approach or simply erroneous when it comes to art and ivory carvings in particular.

López-Ruiz mingles the inhabitants of Phoenician cities in the Levant with enterprises and colonies of Phoenician origin in the western Mediterranean. Even if mercantile enterprises originating in Phoenician cities of the Levant were largely responsible for spreading Levantine artifacts and ideas throughout the Mediterranean, this does not necessarily imply that these artifacts and ideas were exclusively Phoenician. Two recent, concurrently published monographs – one by an Israeli, the other by a Lebanese – focus on the archaeology of the Phoenician cities in the Levant precisely with the aim of disentangling a Levantine–Phoenician identity from the Phoenician–Punic world to the west. While Meir Edrey (2019) implicitly excludes art as a criterion for Phoenician identity in the Levant, Hélène Sader (2019: 175–180) addresses the problem of "artifacts commonly considered as Phoenician but not found in Phoenicia," including mainly ivory carvings and metal bowls, but also tridacna shells and decorated ostrich eggs, and agrees with Martin that these objects cannot be used for the study of Phoenician art.

Although López-Ruiz (2021: 72) recognizes the importance of distinguishing between Levantine art works and "orientalizing art" inspired by them, she continually blurs the boundaries throughout her book, driven by her interest in demonstrating the cultural exchange with Phoenicians as makers of the Mediterranean. It is true that a distinction can at times be tricky. With regard to ivory carvings, however, scholars agree that those found in the central and western Mediterranean – Malta, Carthage, Etruria, Sardinia, Iberia – were local products rather than imports from the Levant (Lancel 1983; Clark 2007; Torres-Ortiz 2002: 249–260; Le Meaux 2006), while the few Levantine ivories found in the Aegean are conveniently catalogued by Ellen Rehm (in Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005: 111–161).[11] In other words,

[9] For depictions on ivory carvings of palms and stylized trees with such patterns on their trunks, see e.g., IN 4 764–766, 781, 1163; 5 156, 481.

[10] So also Finkelstein and Silberman (2001: 212, 218), based on the dating of the "Phoenician style" in previous scholarship.

[11] The relevant finds from the Idaean Cave were newly published only later, see Sakellarakis & Sapouna-Sakellarakis 2013: pls. 95–110.

no Levantine ivory carvings were found beyond the eastern Mediterranean. This has a good reason, leading to the next point.

López-Ruiz does not differentiate between artifacts of different nature and function, assuming that her Phoenicians traded in Levantine ivory carvings and metalwork as part of an "orientalizing kit" with the goal of "marketing the 'Oriental'" (López-Ruiz 2021: 63–89). This begs the question why anyone would have wanted to market the "Oriental." Moreover, she assumes that "the production of ivories and bronze work was indeed boosted by the demand of the Assyrian elite, who consumed them in parallel with their own Assyrian art" (ibidem: 71–72). Neither the idea that Phoenicians exported luxury goods, an idea largely owed to the impact on scholarship of the ancient Greek stereotype of Phoenician mercantilism, nor the idea that the Assyrians consumed them, are new. However, neither of these two presumptions stand the test of a critical consideration of the nature and function of luxurious ivory furniture (Suter 2011: 223–224).

In contrast, for example, to beads and amulets of glass or faience, no doubt comparable in function to trade beads of early modern times, luxurious ivory furniture was certainly not an item of trade. It is not portable or easily transported, which is precisely why Assyrian palace reliefs commemorate the transport of plundered luxury furniture as a feat. The few Levantine ivories found in the Aegean probably arrived there in opportunistic ways, especially isolated furniture pieces (Braun-Holzinger and Rehm 2005: 181–183; Feldman 2014: 139–173, esp. 146–153). Ivory furniture was made for a small elite circle, for which it served as prestige items. Its function was rhetorical and social in the sense of Arjun Appadurai (1986: 38), which is precisely the reason why the Assyrian kings stripped these objects off their defeated enemies.

While I cannot imagine an Assyrian king consuming status symbols of his defeated foes, I would not entirely exclude that other members of the cosmopolitan Assyrian elite circle occasionally consumed Levantine ivories. Candidates would be queens of Levantine origin, who brought along with them small-scale personal items, such as caskets or cosmetic containers of ivory, like those found in Nimrud's citadel, or provincial governors who were given a share of the booty, as may have been the case of the Levantine ivory furniture found at Arslan Tash (Feldman 2014: 151–153; Cecchini in Fontan and Affanni 2018: 30). When late Assyrian kings appropriated Levantine artifacts and ideas, they did so only after "Assyrianizing" them (Feldman 2011).

The presumption that the Assyrians regularly consumed Levantine ivories leads López-Ruiz (2021: 72) to another mistaken presumption, namely that "the Assyrian reception of Levantine art is then imitated by other elites, whether from Israel, Cyprus, or Greece, who also aspire to acquire them (*sic*)." Because López-Ruiz (2021: 281–313) perceives the Phoenician cities as cultural leaders in the Iron Age Levant, all other Levantine states, including Israel, become minor players emulating the Phoenician model. With regard to ivory carving, she suggests that the original "Phoenician" and "North Syrian" styles "may be substyles within a general Phoenician industry of ivory-carving," some "tailored to North Syrian or Assyrian preferences" (*ibidem*: 295). However, in view of the limited demand for luxurious ivory furniture, one cannot speak of an industry and, in view of the lack of any ivory carvings from Phoenician cities, much less of a Phoenician one. Moreover, Levantine ivory carvings largely resisted Assyrian influence.

In the end, López-Ruiz' thesis appears to be based on a circular argument: everything is Phoenician because it is found in the Mediterranean where Phoenicians were present, and because all this material is associated with them, they must have been the cultural leaders in the Iron Age Levant. Her scenario in which "the Phoenician centers offered the fragmented Levantines an inspiring continuity" and their "uninterrupted palatial and temple traditions as well as their institutions, preserved since the Bronze Age, served as models for the formation of new city-states, such as in Israel, Judah, and the Aramaean and Neo-Hittite states" (López-Ruiz 2021: 281) does not hold up to the evidence. Phoenician city-states were not the only ones in the greater Levant to survive the collapse of the Late Bronze Age palace system, and not all did (Sader 2014: 609); some city-states to their north, a region that James Osborne (2021) now calls the Syro-Anatolian culture complex, also survived and/or were active in Iron Age I, as were some city-states to the south in the region that Ido Koch (2017a, 2017b) calls Southwest Canaan.

Moreover, the Phoenician cities were not the only heirs of the Canaanite legacy; Israel, too, had Canaanite roots (Finkelstein 2013: 109–112). For all we know based on archaeology, Israel became a full-fledged state only in the early 9th century BCE under the Omride dynasty (Finkelstein 2013: 83–117). At that time, however, it certainly was not a minor player, but appears, for example, as the strongest ally with the largest military contingent of the Levantine coalition that fought Shalmaneser III of Assyria in the battle at Qarqar (853 BCE) in exogenous Assyrian sources. Under the Omrides,

and even more so under the long and prosperous reign of Jeroboam II in the 8th c. BCE, Israelite kings and their entourage certainly had the means and capacities for having ivory furniture made for them.

To come back to the Egyptianizing trends, I agree with Beck (2000: 177), Martin (2017: 28), and others that they simply cannot be equated with Phoenician art. López-Ruiz (2021: 285) dates what she perceives as the Phoenician artistic output characterized by Egyptianizing features to the 8th–6th centuries BCE, "precisely the art most exported and influential on orientalizing adaptations abroad." Aside from passing over the question of how Phoenician art looked like before that in view of her thesis that the Phoenician cities were the cultural leaders since Iron Age I, one must recall that the Levantine production of luxurious ivory furniture ceased with the Assyrian annexations and resettlements, which were practically completed by the end of the 8th century BCE. Although the city of Tyre was exceptionally spared this fate, Assyria curtailed its power and eventually also annexed its hinterland (Fales 2017: 230–247). The Egyptianizing trends in Iron Age Levantine ivory carvings, which I suggest to date largely to the 8th century BCE and see, with Feldman (2014: 179), as a reaction to the Assyrian expansion, were then perpetuated in the Mediterranean, where they appear to have simply been appreciated for their origin from time-honored cultures of the East.

Abbreviations used

AT + no.	Fontan and Affanni 2018 + catalogue no.
EIS	Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938.
IN + no. + no.	*Ivories from Nimrud* (see Herrmann 1986, 1992; Herrmann and Laidlaw 2009, 2013) + volume no. + catalogue no.

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Chapter 43:
An unprovenanced inscribed stone macehead

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Abstract. This paper examines a stone votive macehead with an unusual inscription. Through careful analysis, I propose its function, date (early Old Babylonian), and origin (northern Syria). The text's opening provides key evidence for the Akkadian term for macehead: *katappum*. Finally, the question of the object's authenticity is considered.

Keywords: macehead, dedicatory, votive, weapon, *katappum,* Old Babylonian.

Ever since those early days in her small, cramped office at the Israel Museum, and throughout the years at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tallay Ornan has always been, for her colleagues and students, an unfailing fount of knowledge and insights about the art and material culture of the ancient Near East. Adroitly balancing authority with modesty, kindness, and eagerness to lend a hand, Tallay is a model scholar and friend. It is a pleasure and honor to dedicate this short paper to her.

*

Some twenty years ago, an inscribed macehead of hard stone appeared in Christie's 2001 auction catalogue.[1] In March 2022, the macehead re-surfaced in another auction, that of Arte Primitivo New York. In full awareness of the risks of studying such an unprovenanced artifact, especially when it is no longer possible to examine it directly (the present proprietorship of the object is unknown), I had to lean on high resolution photos of the object. Although some doubts as to its authenticity remain (see below), I believe that the macehead is genuine and deserves its own study, for it is interesting and, in some ways, even unique.[2]

The height of the macehead, which the Christie's catalogue describes as "marble," is 12.7 cm. About half of it is entirely lost (Figures 1–3). As Figure 4 shows, a drill-hole intended for a thick shaft, most likely made of wood, was bored through it. The eighteen preserved lines of text, written in lapidary archaic script, run in one ruled column around the circumference of the macehead, ending in an empty space.

Text

1 *a-na* ^{d}IM
2 *be-lí-šu Bi-ni-i*!(Text: DUMU)-*a*
3 DUMU *Mu-tu-UK-ra-šu*
4 *ka-ta-pa-am* : *i-qí-iš*
5 *Ša-ni-gu-ud*
6 DUMU *Ni-pa-li*-AD
7 *a-al-šu a-na Bi-ni-i-a*
8 *i-di-in* : IGI *Ṭa-ab-me*
9 IGI *Ḫu-uš-ḫu-*⌜x⌝
10 IGI *Iš-me*-[DN]
11 ⌜IGI⌝ [...]

(at least 10 lines broken off)

1' [...]-⌜x⌝
2' [DN ^{d}I]M
2' [*ú*? ^{d}]⌜*Iš*⌝-*ḫa-ra*
3' *ki-ma kar-pa-tim*
4' *ḫe-pé-tim*
5' *li-ḫe-pí-a-šu*
6' DUMU.NÍTA *ú šu-ma-am*
7' *a-i*!(Text: DUMU?)-*di-nu-šu-um*

[1] See https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-2034636 (last accessed: 28/09/2022). The same year, another macehead was sold at Christie's. The Sumerian inscription on it tells it was dedicated to the god Nergal by his priest Warad-Erra for the well-being of king Išme-Dagan (Földi 2013 §6.1).

[2] I am grateful to the anonymous colleague who brought this object to my attention and sent me its photos. I thank also Claudio Corsi and Carmel Shayle at Christie's for their help.

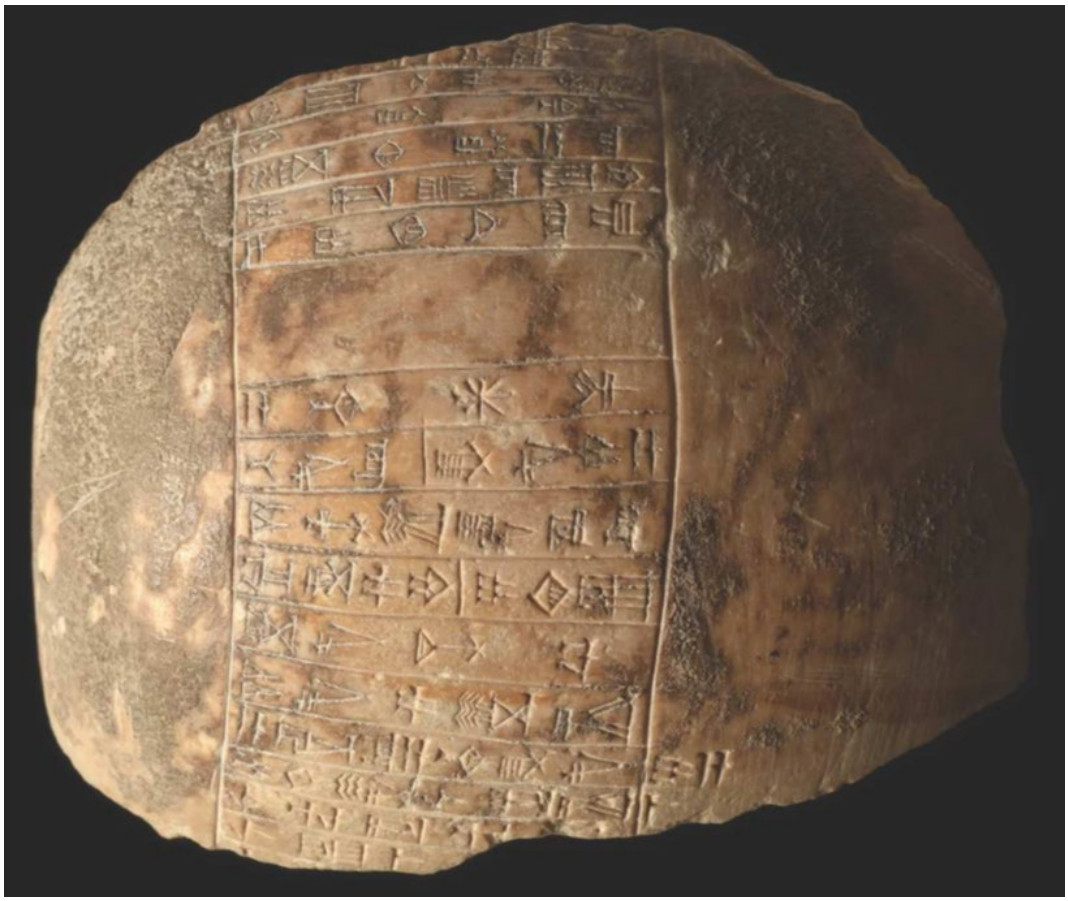

Figure 1. Macehead front (Arte Primitivo, New York:
https://www.arteprimitivo.com/scripts/detail.asp?LOT_NUM=167977)

Figure 2. Macehead front (Arte Primitivo, New York:
https://www.arteprimitivo.com/scripts/detail.asp?LOT_NUM=167977)

Figure 3. Macehead front (Arte Primitivo, New York:
https://www.arteprimitivo.com/scripts/detail.asp?LOT_NUM=167977)

Figure 4. Macehead rear (Arte Primitivo, New York:
https://www.arteprimitivo.com/scripts/detail.asp?LOT_NUM=167977)

Translation

1-4 To Adad, his lord, Biniya the son of Mutu-ukrašu, dedicated (this) macehead.
5-8 Šanigud, the son of Nipaliad, sold his city to Biniya.
8-11 Witness: Ṭāb-mê. Witness: Ḫušḫu.... Witness: Išme-[DN]. Witness: ...
[*If the seller revokes this deed*]
1'-5' May [DN_1, DN_2, Ad]ad [and I]šḫara smash him like a broken pot.
6'-7' May they not give him a male (son) and progeny.

Discussion

A. ***Inscribed maceheads:*** Inscribed maceheads, often dedicated to gods, are well-known in Old Akkadian period,[3] much less so in the Old Babylonian period. Those known are early Old Babylonian.[4] This chronological distribution bears on the date of the object discussed here (see below).

B. ***Thematic division***: Our short text consists of four sections: (a) a performative statement of donation (the macehead is offered by PN_1 to DN); (b) a short historical statement about settlement acquisition (PN_2 sold his city to PN_1), followed by (c) a list of witnesses vouching for the validity of said transaction; and (d) divine sanctions and curses guaranteeing the above transaction.

C. ***Function***: The text records two consecutive property transfers. First, Šanigud gave (i.e. sold) his city to Biniya. Subsequently, Biniya dedicated the mace, which records this transfer, to Adad. However, the chronological order of the two deeds is reversed in the text: it first relates that Biniya dedicated the mace to Adad (*iqīš*), and then, as if it were completely unrelated, it mentions Šanigud's sale of the city (*iddin*, short for *ana kaspim iddin*). The reason for this reversal is clear: the performative act of offering the cultic macehead to the god, though no doubt subsequent to the acquisition of the land, is religiously more important than the change in ownership of the real estate. Linking the two separate acts by juxtaposing their written record on a single object has a clear reason: by donating the cultic macehead to the temple, the object memorializes the transaction of the property and *ipso facto* turns the deity who received the ex-voto (together with other members of the pantheon) into its guarantor. While there are many examples of 3rd and 2nd millennium dedication inscriptions ("to DN, PN has dedicated this-and-that object") and countless records of land transactions accompanied by lists of witnesses, it is difficult to find another text, like the one on the macehead, that combines the two. This peculiar thematic combination casts some doubt on the authenticity of the inscription (more on this below).

D. ***Personal names***: Biniya (or Biliya, if one reads *Bi-lí-i-a*), Ša-ni-gu-ud, Ni-pa-li-AD and Mutu-UKrašu are not easily construed, nor are they common or prosopographically known. *Ša-ni-gu-ud* and *Ni-pa-li*-AD may stem from a non-Semitic language (unless we take *Nippal*(*i*)-*abam*(AD) to mean "we shall satisfy the father", an awkward, unattested name). Mutu-UKrašu could perhaps mean "Man of Tukriš", but that would be a stretch.

E. ***The Akkadian term for macehead***: The opening of the text supplies valuable, self-referential evidence for the identification of the macehead as *katappum*: *ana Adad bēlišu Binīya mār Mutu-UKrašu katappam iqīš* (ll. 1–4). The exact shape and nature of the weapon referred to as *katappum* was a matter of debate. CAD K 303 considered it to be "(a container, usually of metal)," but Durand (1998: 392) already clarified that *katappum* is a weapon of some sort – a lance or an axe (so also Stol 2014–2016). Charpin (2001; 2006: 98) discussed a ceremonial *katappum* made of silver, and whose "eyes" (*īnātušu)* and "pegs" or "pimples" (*sikkātušu*) were made of gold, that was delivered from Terqa to Yamḫad on the occasion of the funeral of Yarīm-līm (ARMT XXV 17: 1–4). However, he refrained from committing himself to the precise identity of this weapon. The present inscribed object seems to answer the question: *katappum* designates a macehead. This fits well with the aforementioned Mari document, which informs us that the *katappum* could have "eyes" and "pegs" (that is, a spiked mace with depressions). Further, it is worth noting that in at least two cases, here and in the diplomatic dispatch for Yarīm-līm's funeral, a *katappum* was chosen to be offered to the storm god, or to his direct realm of influence, Yamḫad,[5] hinting that this weapon was specifically connected to Adad.[6]

F. ***Date of the inscription***: Lapidary script, unlike cursive writing on soft medium, can be deceiving, and there are known cases of archaic signs used in later texts (a famous example is the signs on the law stele of Hammurāpi). With this caveat in mind, it is possible to assign the signs on the macehead to

[3] Texts after Frayne 1993. Sargon: E2.1.1.4. Rīmuš: E2.1.1.10; E2.1.1.13; E2.1.1.17; E2.1.1.20. Man-ištūšu: E2.1.3.4; RIME 2: E2.1.3.5. Narām-Sîn: E2.1.4.32; E2.1.4.35–39; E2.1.4.2005–2006. Šar-kali-šarrī: E2.1.5.9. Cf. also E2.2.14; E3.13.2.2001.
[4] Texts after Frayne 1990. Abi-sarē: E4.2.6.2. Ilum/Anum-muttabbil (Dēr): E4.12.2.
[5] Cf. Kupper 2006, for the connection of *katappum* with another major Syrian polity, Ebla.
[6] The question of what distinguishes *katappum* from other terms that seem to denote "mace" (as, e.g. *ḫuppalûm*, *mašgašûm*, *miṭṭum*, *sankullum*) cannot be addressed here.

the early Old Babylonian period, or, perhaps earlier, to the Ur III period, for the following reasons.[7] As shown above (A), inscribed maceheads are typical of the Old Akkadian period, less so in the early Old Babylonian period. Grammatically, the short text shows sufficient features of Old Babylonian: full mimation, distinguished accusative (l. 5') and dative attached pronouns (l. 7'). The use of the du. verbal form (*li-ḫe-pí-a-šu*, l. 5') and the use of the sign *ú* for "and" (l. 6') can all be considered good Old Babylonian features. The attested PNs also support a dating to the early 2nd millennium. While PNs with the component *Ṭāb...* (l. 8) are known from the Old Akkadian (Gelb 1957: 301) and Ur III periods (Hilgert 2002: 612), and also from Amorite names (Streck 2000: 404), two other PNs clearly reflect the Old Babylonian onomasticon. First, the verbal form *išme* in the PN *Išme*-[DN] (l. 10) is characteristic of Old Babylonian, where the vowel coloring *a* > *e* is ubiquitous,[8] and the component *Mutu...* (l. 3) is typically found in Amorite names (Streck 2000: 401).[9] Finally, the fact that *katappum* is so far attested only in the 2nd millennium and not earlier (cf. Schrakamp 2010: 222ff.) further tilts the scales in favor of an Old Babylonian dating. Thus, based on the epigraphy and grammar, as well as the lexicon and onomasticon, it is safe to date the inscription on the macehead to the Old Babylonian period, perhaps to the early part thereof.

G. Possible provenance: The provenance of the macehead is nowhere indicated. Two points, however, argue in favor of a northern Syrian origin. First, the act of purchasing a city is, to the best of my knowledge, unknown in southern Mesopotamia. Such transactions, by contrast, are attested in Old Babylonian Alalaḫ and from other locations in the kingdom of Yamḫad (Lauinger 2015: 2 and passim). Second, the appearance of the goddess Išhara (l. 2') suggests a northern origin, for this goddess spread from Anatolia into northern Syria, to the vicinity of Alalaḫ among other places, where she was revered (Frantz-Szabó 1976–1980).[10] The fact that the macehead was dedicated to the storm god, Adad, may further bolster this suggestion, as this god was especially venerated in northern Syria, particularly in Yamḫad.[11]

H. A fake? As mentioned above, the thematic composition of this short inscription, which combines a dedication to a temple with a record of a real estate sale, is unusual, if not unique. This thematic amalgam raises doubts about the authenticity of the object as a whole, or at least of its inscription(s). There are additional epigraphical peculiarities that raise suspicion: (a) *Bi-ni-i-a* (l. 2) is written with a DUMU instead of *i* (but not so in l. 7!), and the same confusion occurs in *a-i*!(Text: DUMU?)-*di-nu-šu-um* (l. 7'); (b) the two consecutive ḪI signs in *ḫe-pé-tim* (l. 4') and in *li-ḫe-pí-a-šu* (l. 5') are not identical; and (c) text separators are found in two lines (ll. 4, 8), an unexpected phenomenon in Old Babylonian texts of the period. Nevertheless, I consider the text to be genuine. The inaccurate execution of some signs is, I believe, to be attributed to an inexperienced scribe, for correcting signs on a hard lapidary medium is difficult, if not impossible. The use of separators may be explained as a "peripheral" scribal practice, for the macehead originated, as I have postulated, not from the heartland of Mesopotamia. Unless evidence to the contrary comes up, I consider this macehead to be authentic, adding valuable data to our knowledge of the Old Babylonian period.

[7] Earlier periods are unlikely, for in the 3rd millennium this kind of text would have mentioned a member of the royal family of Agade, or written in Sumerian.

[8] In Old Akkadian one expects *isma*^{c} instead, cf. Hasselbach 2005: 84–85, 221.

[9] No such names are found in the Ur III period (cf. Hilgert 2002).

[10] Išḫara is not mentioned in any monumental Old Babylonian inscriptions known to me.

[11] Adad was of course worshiped throughout the Fertile Crescent, so this point is certainly not conclusive.

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Chapter 44:
Topographic imagery in pictorial art[1]

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אֱלֹהֵי הָרִים אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (מל"א כ: 23)
Their God is a God of Mountains
(1 Kings 20:23)

Abstract. Topographic formations –mountains, especially those whose peaks are covered by clouds or hidden in mists, or volcanic ones that erupt periodically, rivers, caves and clefts– ignited human mytho-poetic imagination. Mountains were sanctified and became the abode of gods. In Sumerian literature mountains were perceived as connecting between sky and the worldly terrain, a means of ascending to the heaven and descending to earth. Hence the mountain became a metaphor for the temple, where mortals and gods contacted. This perception gave rise to sacred architecture and aesthetics of the zikkurat, the stepped mountain-temple. Where there were no mountains, an artificial mountain, the zikkurat, was erected. Mountains were perceived as divine and became the abode of the gods.

Mountain gods or personifications of mountains are typical of mountainous terrain. The article traces the development of visual images of mountain gods, recognizable by their hunch and the skirt of scales that represent hills. Leaning on literary sources from Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia to the Levant, the present contribution attempts the identification of mountain gods. Finally, it suggests that the ancient Israelites were familiar with the visual image of the mountain god.

Keyword: Topographic formations, Mountains and springs, Mountain gods, Scaled skirt, Spring goddesses, Storm gods, Kuntillet ʿAjrud plaster inscription, Biblical mountain gods.

Humankind's great achievements in art and myth arose from its encounters with Nature. Humanity found grandeur in formations such as mountains, especially those whose tops are veiled by clouds or mists (compare Exodus 24: 15–18) and water sources. Recognizing the numinous presence in mountain peaks and fresh-water springs sparked Society's mytho-poetic and visual imagination. The human mind has been translating the way the world was experienced into symbols, whether visual or verbal. In a late 7th millennium shrine at Çatal Höyük a wall painting froze into permanence the twin peaked Hasan Dağ in volcanic eruption (Mellaart 1967: 133, figs. 59, 60). Mountains were sanctified divine abodes. The Sumerians conceptualized mountain ranges as the *axis mundi* both separating and connecting heaven and earth,[2] enabling the ascent to and descent from heaven (Glassner 2002: 32; Goodnick Westenholz 2004: 305–306). Thus, the mountain became a simile for the temple, the place where gods and humans met. Numerous temples were named "House Mountain" or in their names the cuneiform signs KUR "mountain" and AN "heaven" were combined (George 1993: 100–102). This perception influenced architectural aesthetic and actual building practices, embodied in the stepped temple, the zikkurat, a tiered mountain, erected in the flat alluvium plain of Mesopotamia, where there were no mountains (Steinkeller 2007: 225–230). The Babylonian Flood tablet in the Gilgamesh Epic relates that when the waters receded the ark landed on Mount Niṣir /Nimush, one of two peaks situated 80 kilometers north-east of Kirkuk, where it rested for six days (Parpola 2014: 469–470). On the seventh, Utnapishtim, the flood hero, left the ark whose seven storeys and measurements simulate the peaked zikkurat (Glassner 2002: 33; George 2011: 156; Parpola 2014: 472; Pedersen 2023: 184–190), and made offerings to the gods *ina muḫḫi ziq-qur-ra-at šadî*/KUR "on the zikkurat of the mountain."[3] The offerings pleased the gods and the flood hero and his wife were granted eternal life at the

[1] It is a great pleasure to offer this paper to my friend and colleague Tallay, with whom I shared my alma mater. It is with gratitude, esteem and affection that I raise a cup and toast to you, Tali: To Life! For the English translation of the Bible I have used *The Jewish Study Bible Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation* edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Michael Fishbane consulting editor, New York 1999.

[2] The same holds true for Israelite thought, where the foundations of mountains reach down into subterranean waters (Deuteronomy 32:22; Jonah 2:7; Psalms 104:6–8), their peaks into the upper spheres. Mountains are seen as primordial structures which constitute the pillars of the universe, binding together its three great strata: netherworld, earth, and heaven (Exodus 20:4 = Deut 5:8; Prov. 8:22–29) (Talmon 2013: 66).

[3] A similar idea lies in the background of the biblical Tower of Babel tradition (Gen 11:1–9), in which the tower serves as an artificial substitute for a mountain. To build a tower whose top reaches to the heavens (11:4) is equivalent to attempting to attain the sphere of the gods by ascending a cosmic mountain (Talmon 2013: 66).

pī nārāti, the "mouth of the rivers", the source or spring of waters (Gilgamesh XI 142–206; George 2003: 712–717; Parpola 2014: 469, no. 1). An educated Assyrian reader would have recognized the literary allusions in this passage as part of their visual vocabulary.

Third millennium texts are replete with sacred places related to the geography of north Mesopotamia/north Syria. These toponyms feature in private names, where the geographic element is defined by the god determinative. Enlil's epithet was ^{d}KUR, "divine mountain", and at Mari the local writing of the god Dagan's (father of the storm god Adad) name was ^{d}KUR (Fleming 1994; Zadok 1999-2000; Feliu 2003: 30 note 196, 215–216), indicating that the geographical features were perceived as the gods themselves. Another geographical–theophoric element in private names was mount Ebiḫ, identified as the Hamrin range east of the Tigris (Lambert 1983: 84). In the Old Babylonian period the topographic elements *šadûm* "mountain" and *ṣērum* "plain, field" replace divinized toponyms. *šadûm* and *ṣērum* are cognate with the etymologies for the Hebrew, אֵל שַׁדַּי ʾEl Shaddāy, "mountain-" or "field god" (Michalowski 2003: 407; Lewis 2020: 84). To the west, Sinai, Olympus and Ṣaphon were sanctified, but they were seats of gods, not the gods themselves. I will return to Ṣaphon later. Hittite texts mentioning mountain gods bear witness to an ongoing tradition of numinous mountains (Haas 1982; Lambert 1983: 84).

Visual rendering of mountains

In visual culture mountain gods are distinguished by their signature skirt of scales or imbrications representing mountains (Figure 1a), as in the Sumerian pictograph KUR (Figure 1b), made-up of three mountains (or mountain crests) signifying "mountain, land", and also "netherworld". Mountains depicted as scales survived into the Classical period, as attested in the Roman coins of Caesarea, modern Kayseri, from which the volcano Mount Erciyeş, the highest mountain in Central Anatolia, not far from the site of Kültepe, can be seen. It is possible that in Hellenistic and Roman times a cult was associated with the mountain, named Argaios. On the Roman coins the scaled mountain Argaios is mounted on an altar, hence the object of worship. When the mountain Argaios was depicted alone, it is possible that the sacred mountain took the place of the shrine (Börker-Klähn 1998: 242–243, 251; Belis 2021: 77–78, fig. 5).

Mountain gods in Mesopotamia

The scaled skirt representing mountains crystalized in the Mesopotamian sphere in the Akkadian period. A relief plaque from Tell Asmar depicts a frontal god, the lower part of his body imbricated, between worshippers (Frankfort 1943: 19, no. 331, pl. 70A). An unprovenanced mold fragment depicts the warrior Ishtar seated in the company of the deified Naram-Sin on top of a seven-storeyed mountain floating above the waters that issue from the skirt of a spring goddess. The latter is depicted against a mountainous terrain with two mountain gods, all three of them bearing gifts to Ishtar and the king, leading two prisoners by a rope from the mountains (Hansen 2002). The god's skirt may echo the sun god's epiphany as he rises between mountains from the interior of heaven, hidden behind scaled terrain, as depicted on Akkadian seals, especially those that depict the god behind the mountains that hide him from the waist down (van Buren 1955: figs. 2,11; Boehmer 1965: pls. 33–35). King Iasmaḫ-Addu of Mari (first quarter of the 18th century BCE) dedicated a divine statue wearing a scaled skirt to the Son God Shamash, according to the text inscribed on the statue (Orthmann 1985: 292, no. 161; Braun-Holzinger 1999: 158–159). Ursula Moortgat-Correns noted that the god's hands clasped to the chest, in a gesture of prayer and supplication, do not conform with the usual depictions of Shamash, who typically holds his insignia. The prayer gesture, she argued, was reserved to minor deities, such as mountain gods in Hittite art (see below). She therefore concluded that the figure was part of a group statue, which included the sun god between personified mountains, of whom only one survived (Moortgat-Correns 1986).

The god Ashur

The god Ashur may count among the earliest deities represented as mountains. His name is that of the city Ashur, meaning that the god himself was the deified city. Lambert argued that Ashur was the name of a deified natural hill rising above its surroundings, a spur of Jabal Makhul which continues the Hamrin range, ancient Ebiḫ, on the west side of the Tigris that washes its edge. This holy spot was settled because of its strategic location. Its inhabitants converted the mountain into a city, at the same time changing the *numen loci* into *a deus persona* (Lambert 1983: 85–86; Veenhof 2008: 22). Ashur as a mountain appears in private names such as *Aššur-šad-ilī* "Ashur is the mountain of the gods", *Aššur-bēl-šadūʾe* "Ashur lord of the mountains" and *Aššur-šadūni* "Ashur is our mountain" (Kryszat 1995: 203; Lassen 2017: 187).[4]

[4] In the Gilgamesh epic the skipper who caulked Utnapishtim's boat was named Puzur-^{d}KUR.GAL "The hidden place of the deified great mountain." The skipper does not appear in Atrahasis on which the Gilgamesh flood story was based, and is therefore an addition by a first millennium poet. Parpola posits that the Sumerogram KUR.GAL, "great mountain" one of Ashur's most prominent epithets, was read in Akkadian as Ashur, hence the skipper's name was Puzur-Ashur, a name of three Assyrian kings, the first of whom, ca. 2050, was considered the founder of the Assyrian dynastic line (Parpola 2014: 473–474). According to Assyrian royal ideology the king was Ashur's representative on earth (Parpola 2014: 473–474).

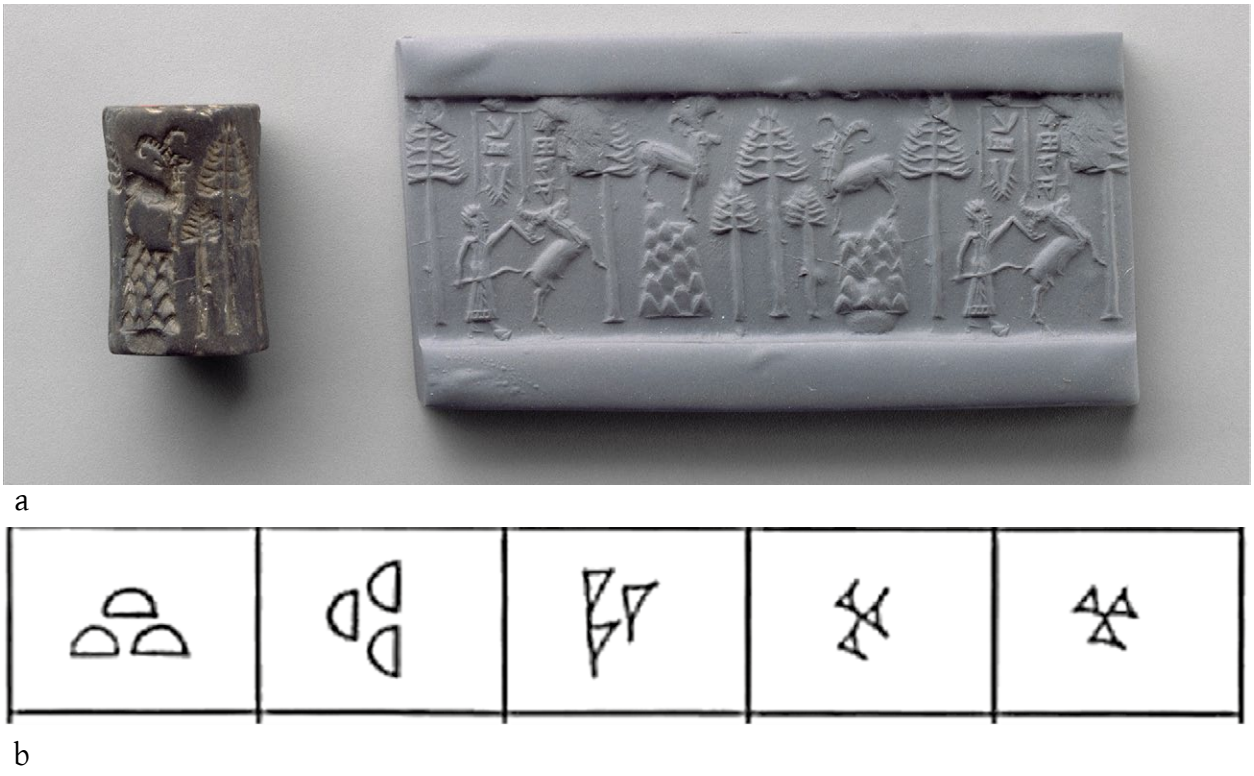

Figure 1a–b. a) Depiction of scaled mountains, Akkadian cylinder seal (Metropolitan Museum of Art 41.160.192 Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, 1941 Public Domain); b) The pictograph KUR.

Until the first millennium, when he was depicted as the bellicose god of the conquering imperialists, Ashur's iconography is evasive. Clues for reconstructing the god's early image may be found in the glyptic of the Assyrian merchant colonies in Anatolia. Bullae sent from Ashur to *kārum* Kanish, thence to the burnt palace at Acemhöyük, their find place, were impressed with a seal depicting a suppliant goddess before a seven-tiered scaled structure standing on four feet, from which a bull's head protrudes (Figure 2). The seal inscription reads "Seal of divine Ashur, of the excise, of the City-office". Veenhof suggested that the seven-tiered scaled structure with the bull's head peeping from it depicts the god Ashur mentioned in the inscription, as the deified mountain (Veenhof 1993: 651–652, no. 27, pl. 124: 3–4; Özgüç 2015: 63). The seven tiers recall the seven-storeyed zikkurat and Utnapishtim's ark (Glassner 2002: 33; Parpola 2014: 471–472; Bodi 2021: 176, 178; cf. Amiet 1951: figs. 2, 3). The four feet on which the structure rests indicate the god's pedestal or altar, which survive in the altar on the Roman coins of Kayseri mentioned above. The bull protome peeping from the tiered structure correlates with the temple name É-*ri-mu-um* "House of the Wild Bull", Ashur's temple in the city of Ashur attested in a building inscription of Erishum I (1974–1935 BCE) (Grayson

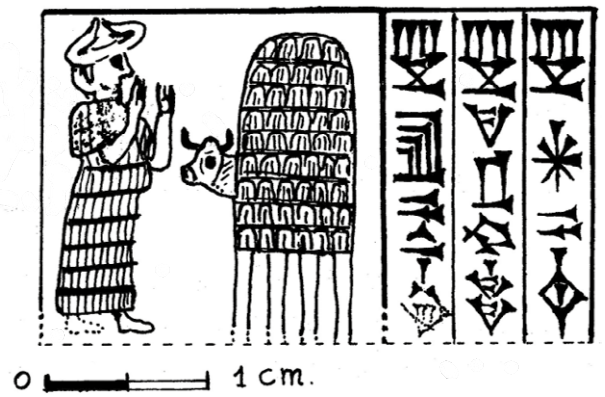

Figure 2. Seven-tiered scaled structure with a peeping bull's head. Cylinder seal impression from Acemhöyük (after Veenholf 1993: pl. 124 no. 3).

1987 [2002]: 20 Erišum I, A.O.33.1: 16; Kryszat 1995: 203; Lassen 2017: 182–183, 189–190). Old Assyrian seals and local seals carved in Anatolia that were inspired by the former, depict a bull surmounted with a cone as the object of worship (Figure 3). The image appears on seals that belonged to Assyrian officials in Anatolia, which must have been meaningful to them. Agnete Lassen suggests that the cone stands for Ashur the mountain,

Figure 3. Bull with a cone. Assyrian cylinder seal impression from Kültepe (after Lassen 2017: fig. 2).

whom the Assyrian merchants worshipped away from home (Lassen 2017: 182–183, 189–190).[5]

A stone relief depicting a mountain god was recovered from a well in the main court of the Ashur temple at Ashur (Figure 4). The god's skirt and hat are scale-patterned. He is flanked by two goddesses, each holding a vase with flowing water, and wearing wave-patterned skirt and hat. Goats nibble at the fruits sprouting from the branches the god grasps. The god's identity may be deduced from the inscription of Ilu-shumma, father of Erishum I (Klengel-Brandt 1980). It tells that the god Ashur opened two springs in mount Ebiḫ, which he enclosed within a brick wall. The inscription literally may be taken as describing the Ashur well-relief, which shows the anthropomorphic god Ashur alongside personifications of fresh-water springs as the nourisher and reviver of living beings. Thrown into the well when the city was destroyed in the late 7th century, the relief could have been part of the well structure mentioned in the inscription (Kryszat 1995: 204; Frayne 1997: 22). The god on the relief could be Ashur, lord of Mount Ebiḫ (Moortgat 1984: 70–71, 77, 80 pl. 30), on which the temple of Ashur was built, or the personification of Mount Ebiḫ, Ashur's attribute (Uehlinger 1997: 80). A millennium later Ashur is depicted standing on a mountain with his consort Mullissu mounting her horned lion on the Neo-Assyrian seal of Adad-nasḫira, the eunuch who was in the service of Adad-nerari III and Shalmaneser IV (Niederreiter 2016).

Figure 4. The god Ashur as a mountain god between two spring goddesses. Stone relief from Ashur (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International ArchaiOptix)

Royal Old Assyrian inscriptions pair the god Ashur with Adad, indicating a reflection of the Syrian pantheon,

[5] In Hittite hieroglyphs a triangle combined with the signifier for "god" indicate the divine mountain (Laroche 1960: 112–113, no. 207; Casabonne 2007: 133).

Figure 5. Mountain god between two bull men. Ain Dara temple (after hittitemonuments.com Ain Dara E4).

headed by El and Baal/Hadad "the roaring one", who is already mentioned in the third millennium BCE texts from Ebla. Baal, Hadad's epithet, became the god's name in the coastal Levant (Greenfield 1993: 54; Schwemer 2016: 72, 78, 87).

1 Kings 20: 23 and Mountain gods in pictures

Mountain gods are typical of mountainous regions. When in the biblical account in I Kings 20: 23 (quoted as the point of departure for the present discussion) Ben-Hadad's ministers advise the Aramaean king to attack Ahab's Army in the plain because his god is a mountain god, they may have envisioned the mountain gods with their skirt of scales at the temple of ʿAin Dara 40 kilometres north-west of Aleppo. Founded in the 13th century it existed till 740. Mountain gods are depicted on orthostates that lined the podium base of the Holy of Holies (Abū Assāf 1990: 28, 37–38, pls. 43–46a) (Figure 5) as well as on a statue base that was found in the lower town and must have belonged to the temple (Abū Assāf 1990: pls. 49–50; Weippert 2003: 267) (Figure 6). Another mountain god orthostate (partly preserved) was embedded in the western wall of the antechamber (Abū Assāf 1990: 36, pl. 41b). The temple combines two traditions. The *in antis* plan is north Syrian, known already in the third millennium (Castel 2010). Becoming the typical temple of the southern Levant in the second millennium and in Iron Age Judah, see the excavated temple at Moẓa (Kisilevitz 2015), the plan

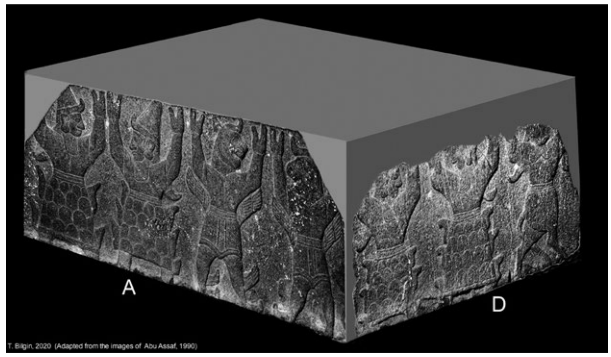

Figure 6. Mountain gods on a statue base. Ain Dara (Tayfun Bilgin hittitemonuments.com Ain Dara).

was applied to the biblical description of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6). In decoration the Anatolian element is dominant. The ʿAin Dara orthostates with mountain gods of Hittite derivation were installed in the temple in its early phase, dating to the Hittite Empire period, 13th–12th centuries BCE (Alexander 2002: 17; Zimansky 2002: 178–180; Novak 2012: 50–51).

The mountain god often appears together with a spring goddess, as on the stone relief from the well at Ashur mentioned above, featuring the mountain god between two spring goddesses. The coupling of mountains and water, representing fecundity of water and earth,

Figure 7a–b. a) Fountain statue of a goddess with the ever-flowing vase (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic (CC BA–SA 2.0) Robsonc Gary Todd); b) Goddesses with flowing vases in the investiture scene of the palace of Mari (Wikimedia Commons Public Domain).

Sumerian ḪEGAL (Ellis 1977), knows no boundary. Formally, springs were envisioned as a young women, such as the stone goddess, with the ever-flowing vase that served as a fountain in the palace of Mari, one of a pair that stood at the base of Tribune Cella 66, facing the throne in room 65 (Figure 7a).[6] Wearing a wavy garment, the fountain goddess was replicated on the Investiture mural in Mari Court 106 (Al-Khalesi 1978: 24–25, 41–45, pl. 11) (Figure 7b). An alabaster mace-head from the palace of Mari features two pairs of a mountain god holding a large vase and a spring goddess wearing a wavy garment grasping a small vase (Alexander 1970). The relief façade of the Ishtar temple at Uruk, built by the Kassite king Kara-Indash (ca. 1413), shows alternating male gods wearing scaled skirts and a goddesses garbed in a wavy robe of water streams, all holding flowing vases. Between the god and the goddess, water flows on two mountains (Moortgat 1984: 41–42, 77, pls. 21–22) (Figure 8).[7] A cylinder seal impression from Emar depicts a mountain god and a spring goddess flanking the storm god (Beyer 2001: 75) (Figure 9). These representations of a mountain god along with a spring goddess echo dedications made by kings of monuments incorporating the two divinities. Samsuiluna (1749–1712 BCE) dedicated to the temple a royal platform wrought in copper of mountains and streams that bring fullness and overflowing (Sumerian ḪEGAL), after which he named his 8th regnal year (Horsnell 1984: 30–31, Si 8). The years 13, 14 and 17 of Ammiṣaduqa (1647–1624 BCE) were named after similar dedications.[8] Finally, Sargon II (721–705 BCE) made dedications of stone representing a mountain (^{na4}*ṣalam šadi*) along with rivers (van Buren 1941: 84).

The mountain god himself may be the source of water, as attested by the ivory inlay from Ashur (Martin 1995) (Figure 10). One wonders whether Sargon II 's mountain and rivers image comprised a representation similar to the ivory inlay from Ashur.

Mirko Novak (2014: 342) argued that the visual formula of the mountain god was transmitted from Mesopotamia to Anatolia by Kassite craftsmen during the Empire period, as evidenced by the sculptures of Yazılıkaya and Eflatun Pınar (see below). He finds support for this cultural transmission in Hattushili III's (1267–1237 BCE) letter to Kadshman-Enlil II, requesting the Kassite king to send him an *ēṣiru*, "maker of images" to create sculptural artworks in the Hittite capital (Mora 2013). However, Hittite artists were in no need for the Kassites to mediate the visual formula of a god wearing a scaled skirt, since it was known in Anatolia already in the Old Hittite period. The Old Hittite Louvre seal (Parrot 1951) (Figure 11) depicts two mountain gods: one whose head

[6] Compare Song of Songs 4:12 "A garden shut up is my sister, my bride; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed":
גַּן נָעוּל, אֲחֹתִי כַּלָּה; גַּל נָעוּל, מַעְיָן חָתוּם, where the bride's modesty and sexual exclusiveness is portrayed as a locked garden, a spring of fresh water.

[7] The Kassites were a mountain people, coming from the Zagros. A variety of mountain gods appears in Kassite glyptic, see Matthews 1990: 60–61.

[8] https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=samsuiluna https://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=ammisaduqa

Figure 8. Façade of the Kara-Indash temple at Uruk, depicting mountain gods and spring goddesses (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike Unported 3.0, CC BY–SA–3.0, Marcus Cyron).

Figure 9. Spring goddess as a young maiden. Cylinder seal impression from Emar (after Beyer 2001: 75 no. 46).

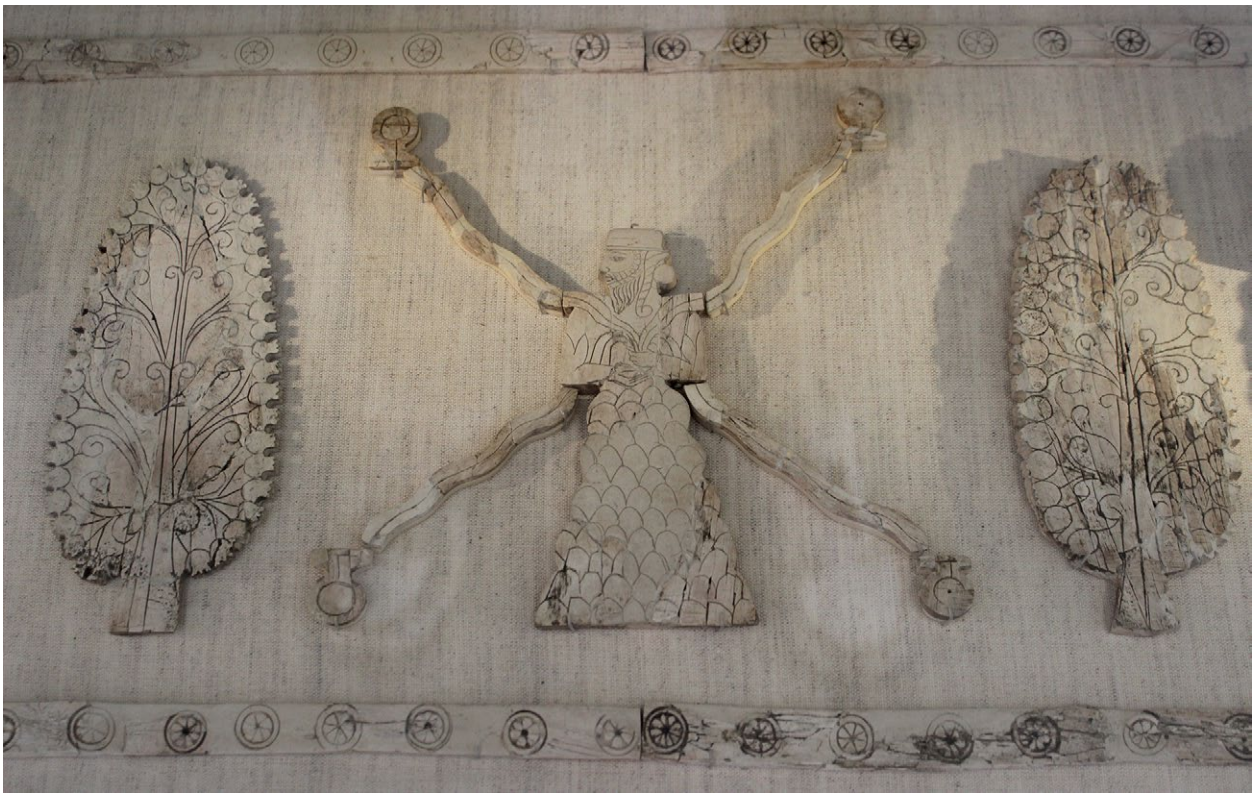

Figure 10. Ivory inlay from Ashur depicting a mountain god grasping a flowing vase (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International Miguel Hermoso Cuesta).

Figure 11. Old Hittite cylinder seal depicting mountain gods gesturing in reverence (after Du Mesnil du Buisson 1959: fig. 1).

Figure 12. Storm god places one leg on two mountains, the other leg rests on the back of a bull. Anatolian cylinder seal impression from Kültepe (after Haas 1994: fig. 85).

Figure 13. The god Teshub treading on bent mountain gods in the rock sanctuary at Yazılıkaya (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, CC BY–SA 3.0, Bernard Gagnon).

and arms only protrudes from the mountainous terrain, reminiscent of the Akkadian sun god rising, the other a god recalling a true mountain god wearing the signature skirt of scales, both raising their hands in reverence.

Mountain gods in Anatolia

Because of the natural landscape of Anatolia, with its high rugged mountain ranges cut by rivers and dotted with natural fresh-water springs, mountains were significant in Hittite religious mentality. The names of the Hittite kings Arnuwanda and Tudhaliya were derived from mountain names. In the visuals there are numerous mountain gods and spring goddesses (Börker-Klähn 1998). The latter appear already in the glyptic of the Assyrian colonies, enthroned with a cup in their hands (Haas 1994: 410; Taracha 2009: 56; Corti 2018) (Figure 12).

Hittite art of the Empire period is characterized by rock reliefs and various forms of sculpture. Open air sanctuaries and rock reliefs carved in the landscape convey Man's emotive participation in Nature. The greatest Hittite rock monument is the open-air sanctuary of Yazılıkaya in Hattusha, in a natural outcropping of the rock formed two chambers, adorned with rock reliefs. The large chamber is adorned with a grand procession of divinities culminating in the meeting of the storm god Teshub and his consort Hebat (Figure 13). Bent mountain gods with bent hats, the mountains Ḫazzi and Namni, carry on their napes the storm god. His consort stands on a feline, that in turn stands on rectangles symbolizing mountains, as does their son Sharrumma, the god linked to the cult of Anatolian mountains and referred to in Hittite texts as the "calf of Teshub" (Alexander 2002: 12; Trémouille 2009: 82).[9] Divine bulls peek out from behind the storm god and the goddess, providing a rare example of ovmerlapping figure in Hittite art. Behind the storm god are two gods, standing on mountains. One, no. 40, is probably Kumarbi signaled by an ear of grain (Collins 2007: 140). The male gods' procession progressing behind the storm god includes more mountain gods. Groups 14, 15 (Figure 14a) with tall hats, and 16a, 17 whose hats are bent (Figure 14b), are each led by a god (van Loon 1985: 21). No. 17 is labeled Namni. Since both 16a and 17 wear bent hats and 17 is labelled Namni, it may be that 16 is the mountain god Ḫazzi.

[9] Originally Sharrumma was a mountain god (Taracha 2009: 122).

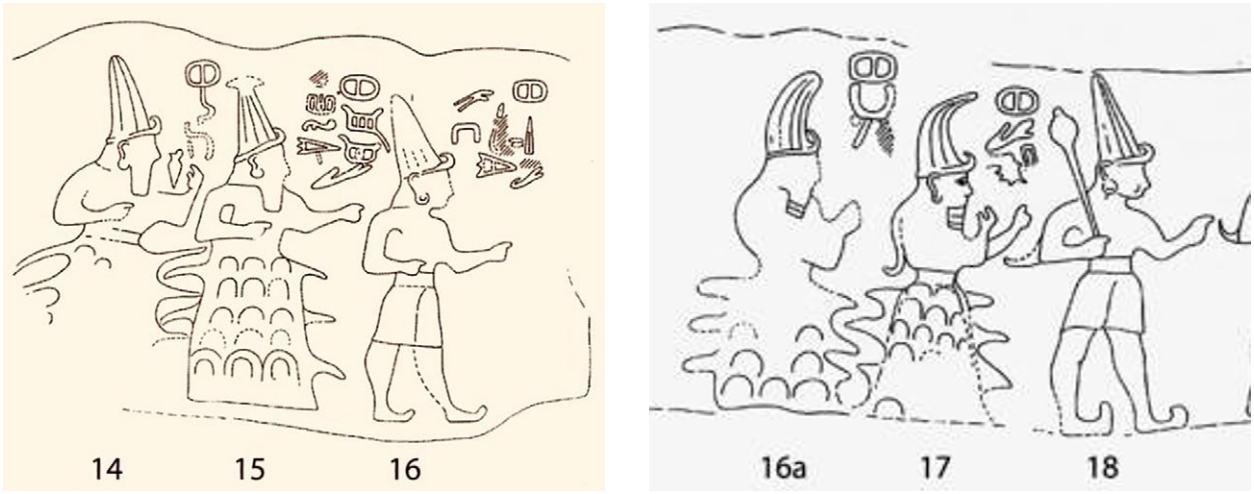

Figure 14a–b. Mountain gods in the divine parade of the rock sanctuary at Yazılıkaya (after Seeher 2011: figs. 31, 36).

Figure 15. The god Sharrumma at Hanyeri (after hittitemonuments.com Hanyeri–02).

The rock relief at Hanyeri, on the east side of the Bey Dağ mountain range in the Gezbel pass from the Taurus mountains to Syria and near twelve springs (present in 1977, Stokkel 2005: 174), shows a local prince labelled Kuwalanamuwa, facing a mountain god (Figure 15). A bull, as if leaping, stands with its front legs on the god's shoulder, its hind legs placed on an altar (or a mountain?). The inscription "Sharrumma, the strong (king) of the holy mountain" identifies the bull as the bull-mountain god Sharrumma, son of Teshub and Hebat (Haas 1994: 390–391; Trémouille 2006: 199, 202, 211–212; Trémouille 2009: 81–82; Tuba Ökse 2011: 235; Hawkins 2015: 4). Prince Kuwalanamuwa, a high-ranking official during Murshili II 's reign (14th century BCE), also appears on the İmamkulu relief on the road to the Hanyeri relief on the west side of the Bey Dağ (Hawkins 2015: 3–4) (Figure 16). He strides right behind a formation of figures made up of three lion-headed anthropomorphic beings carrying bowing mountain gods who in turn carry on their shoulders storm god of Halab ascending his eagle-chariot drawn by a bull (Hawkins 2003: 171–174). The group faces a plant surmounted by a winged goddess removing her garment, the Hurrian Shaushka, syncretized with the Mesopotamian Ishtar and with the Anatolian Anzili (Hazenbos 2002; Bachvarova 2019: 215). Each of the mountain gods wears a hat bent forward, carries a sword in his belts, and raises a fist (van Loon 1985: 21). This gesture is comparable to that of two tiny mountain gods in a relief vase following the Storm God's bull-pulled eagle chariot who raise a hand before the face, on a fragmentary relief vase from the

Figure 16. Three mountain gods supporting the storm god mounting his chariot. Rock relief of İmamkulu (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, CC BY–SA 3.0, Klaus-Peter Simon).

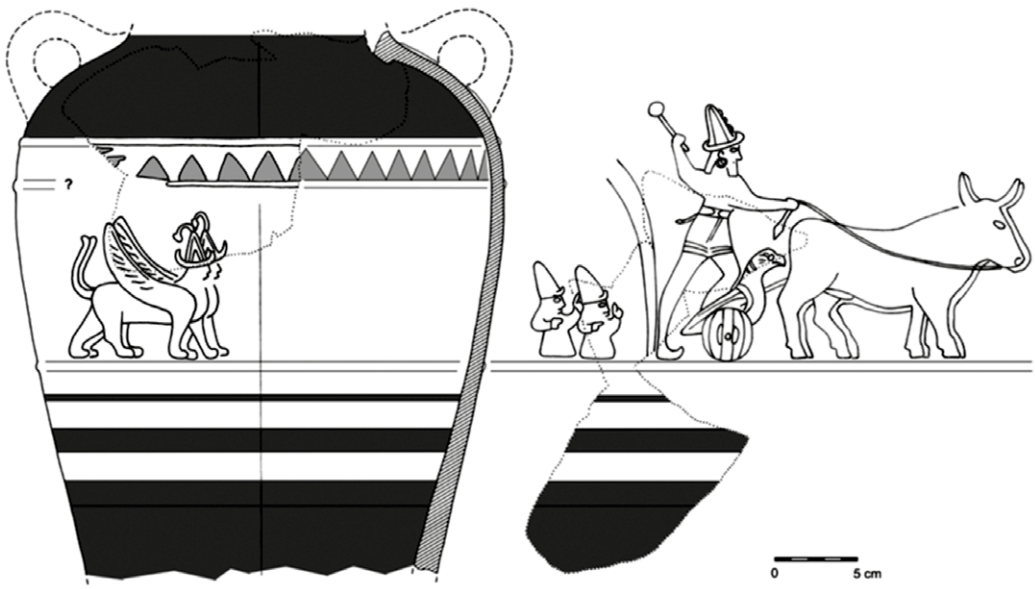

Figure 17. Two mountain gods marching behind the Storm God's chariot. Relief vase from Boğazköy (after Seeher 2007: fig. 1).

southern pools of the upper city at Boğazköy, dating from the second half of the 15th century BCE (Seeher 2007) (Figure 17). These gods raise their left hand before the face. Seeher identifies these mountain gods with Namni and Ḫazzi mentioned in the texts as the god's followers (Seeher 2007).

Another stance typical of mountain gods is the atlantid posture, as evidenced on the ʿAin Dara pedestal mentioned above. Thus, mountain gods (and other hybrids) support winged disks or divine statues. The Hittite ivory from Megiddo ivory features two deities or kings supported by mountain gods and other hybrids

Figure 18. Mountain gods. Hittite ivory from Megiddo (after Alexander 1991: fig. 2).

in a hierarchically ordered format culminating in two winged suns (Alexander 1991) (Figure 18). The ritual axe-head from Şarkışla, a mountain god supports a formation of a deity, winged lions and griffins (Emre 2002: 225, 354 no. 147). The spring sanctuary of Eflatun Pınar near Beyşehir, dating from the 13th century BCE, is a monumental example of such a layered formation of gods and hybrids (Figure 19a). The monument shows the storm god and the sun goddess enthroned above the mountain gods among hybrids supporting winged disks. The bottom row comprises five mountain gods. The three middle ones have skirts pierced by holes that connected to a channel leading water from springs to its north (Bachmann and Özenir 2004: 96, 104–107). Functioning as fountains, the water gushed forth out their scaled skirts into the large basin in an arresting and awe-inspiring spectacle.[10] The fountain holes in

[10] The spring basin, or pool, was named ^{d}KASKAL.KUR, "The (Deified) Road of Earth" regarded as sacred because water connects this world with the underworld (Rutherford 2020: 30). Possibly the entire scene could be interpreted as a cosmological representation of the world, with the sun at the top, the earth with its mountains and springs at the bottom and the gods in the middle functioning as mediators between the different components that constitute the world (Balza 2023: 40–42).

Figure 19a. Monumental relief of the spring sanctuary at Eflatun Pınar (after hittitemonuments.com Eflatun Pınar–07).

the gods' skirts may explain the protrusions in the mountain gods' skirts (e.g., Yazılıkaya and ʿAin Dara) as water gushing forth from a fountain (Bachmann and Özenir 2004: 117, 120, 122; Bachmann 2006: 262), contra Börker-Klähn (1998: 243), who explains these tongue-like forms as flames, hinting at a volcanic eruption. The description of the god Ziwana's effigy, "a man's statue made of iron, 1 ½ cubits tall, beneath him two springs of iron" (Haas 1982: 51), lends support to the fountain interpretation. Spring goddesses flank the monumental relief (Bachman and Özenir 2004: 96–97), conforming with the description of divine springs in Hittite texts: "One statue of a woman, seated, made of iron: the Great Source"; "Išḫašḫuriya of Tiliura: idol. A wicker statue of a woman, seated, with silver overlay. Height: 1 small cubit, ½..." (Laroche 1958: 46). Whether the sculptural monument supported the divine statue found at Fassılar of the storm god standing on a mountain god between two lions is still debated (Mellaart 1962; Bachman and Özenir 2004: 91–92; Tuba Ökse 2011: 225; Varlik *et al.* 2016; Erbil 2017: 192–193) (Figure 19b). Eflatun Pınar exemplifies the worship of mountain god and spring goddess, his consort (Laroche 1958: 47; Taracha 2009: 56; Erbil 2017: 193) in one and the same sanctuary (Taracha 2015: 60–61). It appears that the spring sanctuary of Eflatun Pınar was an important pilgrimage station of the Great King during cultic festivals where religious and political performances were enacted (Erbil and Mouton 2012: 70: Balza 2023: 43–46).

The mountain gods at Eflatun Pınar clasp their hands to the chest in reverence, as do the unfinished mountain gods at the basalt quarry of Yesemek, which were sent to their destinations, where they were worked to represent the local gods in local style (Duru 2004: 81–83) (Figure 20).[11] The tiny ivory mountain god from Boğazköy carved in the round provides a three-dimensional example of this respectful gesture (Bittel *et al.* 1957: 25–28, pls. 23-25; van Loon 1985: 33; Emre

[11] An unfinished relief of a mountain god with upraised arms was incorporated in the northern pedestal wall of the cella in the temple of the storm god at Aleppo. It is dated to the Hittite Empire phase of the temple, roughly the 14th–13th centuries BCE (Kohlmeyer 2000: 34, pl. 22; and 2009: 194–196).

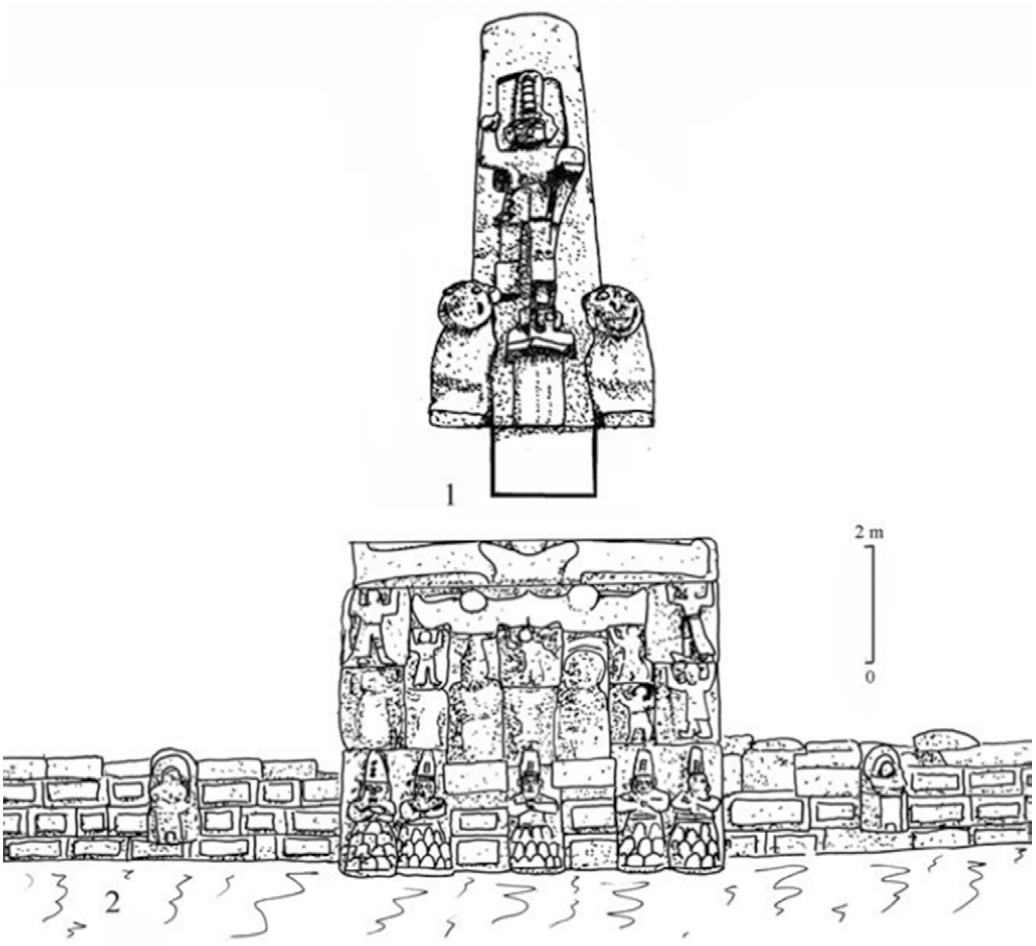

Figure 19b. Reconstruction suggestion of the Eflatun Pınar relief topped with the Fassılar statue of the storm god (after Bittel 1976: fig. 264).

Figure 20. Unfinished orthostate depicting mountain gods in the basalt quarry of Yesemek (after Wikimedia Commons Public Domain).

Figure 21. Ivory statuette of a mountain god from Boğazköy (after Bittel *et al.* 1957: pl. 24).

2002: 222 fig. 4; 228–230; Seeher 2011: 41; Tuba Ökse 2011: 222–226) (Figure 21).

According to the Hittite-Hurrian theogony, the young storm god vanquished the divine mountains, who became the god's acolytes and supports. The battle between the storm god and mountain gods is visually rendered on an Early Hittite cylinder seal (cf. figure 11 above) dated to the 17th century BCE. This defeat also explains the reverential gesture of the mountain gods. However, in central Anatolia the mountain gods' cult continued to be practised. At some places it was a mountain god who brought rains, not Teshub the storm god Indeed, a casting mold from Ortaköy /Shapinuwa bears a unique representation of a striding mountain god holding lightning forks, perhaps the storm god of Lightning (Singer 2002: 82; Dietz 2019: 194–193). Or, both the storm god and a mountain god received the cult. Once the storm god overcame the mountain gods, the bull became his attribute, the naked goddess his consort, and the mountains degraded to his mounts (Haas 1982: 73; Bonatz 2007: 3). The Anatolian storm god shared with the god Sharrumma, originally a mountain god depicted as a bull in the Empire period, the bull attribute and his affinity to the naked goddess (Haas 1994: 344, 462–464).

The storm god and the mountains Ḫazzi and Namni in Syria

The mountains the Hittite storm god Teshub treads on are Ḫazzi, where he battled the anthropomorphic mountain Ullikummi (Haas 1982: 143–148; Canby 1989: 116; van Loon 1997: 587–588; Rutherford 2001; Collins 2007: 152), and Namni (Nanni), Jabal al-Aqraʿ, Classical Cassius, and Anti-Cassius(?) respectively (see below). Old Babylonian letters mention Ḫazzi and Nanni in conjunction with Adad of Halab. The mountains were part of Adad of Halab's worship (Schwemer 2001: 228; van Soldt 2009; Archi 2013: 12).[12] The storm god on mountains appears already in the Anatolian group of cylinder seals and on Old Syrian seals (Williams-Forte 1983: figs. 1, 2). In the Anatolian configuration, the storm god has one foot on twin peaks, the other over the back of a bull he controls with a leash (cf. figure 12 above). The other hand grips a snake by its head as it hangs limply. Above the snake is a feathery object, a plant or lightning. Before the god is a disrobing goddess; behind him a spring goddess, enthroned on animals, holds a cup (Leinwand 1984: figs. 53–54; Leinwand 1992: 159–161). On Syrian seals the storm god in smiting posture steps on two mountains, rarely on three. He wields a mace (Dijkstra 1991: pls. 1–3), and spears a snake with a tree-lightning fork (ʿṣ *brq*, Wyatt 2002: 389) (Figure 22),[13] offers a snake and plant to the naked goddess, and controls a bull. The snake may emerge from behind the mountains, hinting at the arena of the god's battle with his enemies. A Syrian cylinder seal depicts the smiting storm god striding on two mountains (Figure 23). A mountain god in Hittite style offers him a rabbit, associated with the god Sharrumma (Dijkstra 1991: 130, pl. 1:2; Burney 2004: 239; and cylinder seal von der Osten 1934: no. 301; cf. Teissier 1996: 81 fig. 140 and photo 165).

The mountain named Ḫazzi in Hittite ritual texts of Hurrian background, Teshub's seat, was known on the Levantine coast by the West Semitic name Ṣaphon. Ṣaphon, Classical Cassius, Jabal al-Aqraʿ north of Ugarit and on the Turkish border, rises 1800 meters high and drops straight to the sea. Mighty Baal, the most important god in the pantheon of Ugarit, dwells on high places of Ṣaphon, *ǵr bʿl*, "Baal's mountain" (Greenstein 1997: 31, CAT 1.16 I 6–9; Pardee 2002: 14 no. 15, 17 no. 10), where his temple was built and where he struggled with his enemies, the snakes. His temple most high touches the sky, where he manifests himself in atmospheric phenomena: lightning, thunder, clouds, rain and storms, all implying fertility (Bordreuil 1991: 23–24; Smith 1994: 122–123, 150, 190; Smith and Pitard 2009: 65, CAT 1.101; Zangger and Gautschy 2019: 27). The mountains he steps on signify his sacred dwelling.

In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle the Storm God's mountain is deified: it is named *ʾil.ṣpn*, "divine Ṣaphon" (Smith and Pitard 2009: 196, CAT 1.3 III, 29). In lists of deities

[12] The storm god battling the anthropomorphic mountain is depicted on the Old Hittite seal mentioned above (Parrot 1951) and on the Hasanlu gold bowl, see Calmeyer 1999: 12.

[13] In biblical figurative language lightning is associated with weapons: arrows (Zechariah 9:14), spear (Habakkuk 3:11), with a sword (Deuteronomy 32:41).

Figure 22. Storm god treading on two mountains, brandishing a mace and vanquishing a snake (after Eisen 1940: no. 158).

Figure 23. A mountain god offers a hare to the storm god (after Dijkstra 1991: pl. 1 no. 2).

Ṣaphon is among recipients of offerings (Smith 2001: 77, 94; Pardee 2002: 14). *bʿl ṣpn,* Baal Ṣaphon is synonymous with ^{d}*Adad bēl ḫuršan ḫazi* "the storm god (^{d}IM=Adad) of mount Hazi", testifying to Baal's different forms of the same god, a figure for his multiple activities and epiphanies (Wyatt 2007: 15–16, 74; Hendel 2020: 123, 126). The only named representation of Baal Ṣaphon appears on a funerary stele from Ugarit inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphs. The god is depicted receiving offerings from "the royal scribe, overseer of the royal domain, Mami the justified, giving an offering to the deity *bʿr ḏ3pwn3* – Baal of the Ṣapan Mountain " (Levy 2014).

On the seal impression of Ḫeshmi-Teshub from Emar (Beyer 2001: 49, A4a) (Figure 24), the god in a short kilt brandishes a mace and a plant. The other god in the long skirt brandishes a mace and controls a bull that leaps over two conventional mountains, perhaps Ḫazzi, the higher one and Nanni. At Emar, where Syrian and Hittite traditions mixed, the two storm gods possibly represented one god, translated from one culture to another. One may posit Teshub (Hittite), Baal (Canaanite) and Dagan (Emar) as local manifestations of a common Semitic storm god (Wyatt 2007: 14, 29). Impressions of the seal of Ini-Teshub, king of Carchemish, found at Ugarit and Emar (Figure 25),

Figure 24. Storm gods mounted on mountain gods. Cylinder seal impression from Emar (after Beyer 2001: 49, no. 4).

Figure 25. From left to right: The bull Sharrumma leaping on a mountain, Teshub on mountain gods, king Ini-Teshub, and the Syrian storm god mounted on a bull and the. Cylinder seal of Ini-Teshub, king of Carchemish, impressed on tablets found at Ugarit and Emar (after Beyer 2001: 48–49 no. 3).

depict the storm god Teshub atop two mountain gods, holding by a leash the bull Sharrumma, his son, leaping on a mountain, the king atop a lion-headed hybrid and a Syrian storm god mounted on a bull (Beyer 2001: 48–49, A3; Schwemer 2016: 87).

Ugarit, on the Mediterranean coast, the most important international port city in the Eastern Mediterranean, conducted long-distance trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange with its contemporary polities in the Mediterranean and up the Nile. Baal Ṣaphon, the lord

Figure 26. Baʿal Ṣaphon on two mountains above a snake on a podium, facing a sailboat with two mariners. Cylinder seal from Tell el-Dabʿa (after Porada 1984: fig. 1).

of Mount Ḫazzi, was therefore the patron of mariners. A cylinder seal discovered in the early Thirteenth Dynasty palace at Tell el-Dabʿa (Figure 26) depicts the storm god in a powerful stride atop two mountains placed above a snake winding on a pedestal. Before the god two men row a sailboat. Behind the storm god are a goring bull above a guilloche band and a lion raising its right paw below it. The theme is Syrian. Stylistic details betray a local cutter (Porada 1984). The storm god must be Baal Ṣaphon, Syrian "Hadad of Mount Ḫazzi" (Dijkstra 1991: 127–137), protector of seafarers and overlord of the sea. Situated on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile Delta, Tell el-Dabʿa was an international harbor city, where exchange and cultural encounters with foreigners took place (Dorner 1994; Bietak 2005: 202). The Canaanite worship of Baal Ṣaphon along with his iconography and myth were brought to Egypt by Syrians (Dijkstra 1991: 128; Bietak 1996: 28–29).

Mountain gods in ancient Israel?

Numerous themes of Ugaritic poetry were embedded in the Hebrew Bible. Biblical authors depicted Yahweh in the Canaanite imagery of Baal, the storm god so that Yahweh took on characteristics of a nature deity. Thus, the creation of Mount Ṣaphon was appropriated by Yahweh (Psalms 89; 13), and Baal's palace was dislodged to Jerusalem (Psalms 48: 2–3; see also Isaiah 2: 2). Isaiah 14: 13–14 mocks the Assyrian king who pretends to divinity in Canaanite imagery: "I will climb to the sky; Higher than the stars of God, I will set my throne. I will sit in the mount of assembly, On the summit of Zaphon will mount the back of a cloud – I will match the Most High" (Smith 1989; Day 2002: 91–127; Lewis 2020: 108–109).

These verses bring to mind the figure of Tudhaliya IV (ca. 1240–1220 BCE) carved on the wall opposite the grand procession at Yazılıkaya (Figure 27). The king strides on two mountain tops in a god-like manner, his figure twice the size of the figures in the gods' procession. His cartouche carved above his extended right arm (no. 64), incorporates the mountain god as a glyph. Likewise, a mountain god is depicted on the seal of Tudhaliya IV and on that of his son king Arnuwanda (Börker-Klähn 1998: 237–238; Seeher 2011: 115–116).[14] The mountains mark Tudhaliya's divine status. The figure may show him after he had died, when he became a god (Canby 1989: 125; Beckman 2002: 40), although textual evidence might suggest that he was deified during his lifetime (Durusu-Tanrıöver 2019: 310).

As customary in ancient Near East religions, the Bible localized deities in geographical settings. The names of the localized deities comprise the divine name and

[14] Relief fragments from the Yalburt pool depict Tudhaliya IV embraced by a mountain god. This unique depiction is unparalleled in the iconography of the divine embrace. The mountain god may represent the divine mountain Tudhaliya, from whom the king derived his throne name; or the god Sharrumma linked to the mountain. The relief might have stood at the entrance to the pool (Karasu *et al.* 2000: 100–101).

Figure 27. Tudhaliya IV godlike, trading on two mountains at Yazılıkaya (Creative Commons Attributes-Share Alike 2.5 Generic China_Crisis).

toponym formula, by which the deity was known in various localities: Ishtar of Arbela and Ishtar of Nineveh, Baal of Halab and Baal Ṣaphon, Baal of Ugarit, Baal of Lebanon and Baal of Sidon, Asherat of Tyre and Asherat of Kition, as well as Yahweh of Teiman and Yahweh of Samaria mentioned in the inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, to name only a few (Wyatt 2007: §k). Biblical authors placed God in geographical setting, such as Yahweh in Hebron (2 Samuel 15: 7) and Yahweh in Zion (Psalms 99: 2) (Hutton 2010: 180–184). Ahab's mountain gods who threatened Ben-Hadad's army were perceived by the Aramaeans as the local gods of the hilly terrain of the Israelite kingdom.[15]

I propose that the mountain gods mentioned in 1 Kings 20: 23 were not an abstract concept to the biblical authors. Rather, they were actually known to them in their visual appearance, whose description is found in archaeology and the Scripture. The plaster inscription KA 4.2. from the bench room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud is particularly revealing in that respect. The fragmentary inscription reads:

2[....] *brʿš · wbzrḥ · ʾl · br*[ʿ*m ·y*] *hw*[*h*
3[....]*r · wymsn · hrm · wydkn · gbnm* [....]

Describing a militaristic wilderness theophany, the inscription portrays a god shining atop a mountain (*wbzrḥ · ʾl)*, melting mountains (*wymsn · hrm)* and crushing (*ydkn) gbnn* (Aḥituv 2014: 36–37; Lewis 2022: 368, 383 no. 50). The melting of mountains appears in the song of Deborah "The mountains melted (*nāzlū*) to YHWH, Sinai before YHWH the God of Israel" (Judges 5: 5). Here Yahweh's presence is referred to in terms of a volcanic eruption,[16] as the liquefaction of mountains (Amzallag 2014). Aḥituv, Eshel and Meshel (2012: 110–111) read *gbnm* and vocalize *gabnunnim*, meaning "mountain peaks",[17] as in Psalm 68: 16–17, a recital replete with Canaanite components, that praises the foundation of the single triumphant God's temple on his *gabnunnim*, "jagged mountain" or "sacred mountain of peaks".[18] The root *gbn*, from which *gabnunnim* derives, signifies "humped" (Ugaritic *gbṯṯ*) (del Olmo Lete 2016: 193), of the human deformities that disqualify a person from serving in the cult (Leviticus 21:20). Applied to mountains, *gabnunnim* conjure up the image of the bent mountain gods carrying the storm god on their shoulders. Thus, in order to personify the mountains, the Psalmist deployed a human feature as a geographical metaphor, following in the steps of the artists responsible for the second millennium BCE visuals. The biblical passages and the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscription are part of the same poetic tradition, and are reminiscent of Near Eastern accounts of theophanies (Mastin 2009: 111). Baruch Levine concluded that "we can argue more assuredly than before that the inscriptions from Kuntillet ʻAjrud speak for those Israelites who retained features of the West Semitic polytheism of the pre-henotheist period" (Levine 2014: 185–187). I would go one step further and propose that

[15] Talmon maintained that during the conquest of the central mountain ridge Yahweh was identified as a mountain deity. In this identification Talmon perceives a variant of the Yahweh image, with a specific attachment to Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb. This association of the God of Israel as a mountain god lingered among the surrounding nations, who perceived him as a typical "mountain god" (1 Kings 20:23). These traditions caused mountains to be understood as the preferred locations of theophanies (Talmon 2013: 63, 67).

[16] Volcanoes are gendered male because they are violent, roaring and destructive and because of the association with metallurgy (Bachvarova 2019: 218).

[17] For a different reading, though of the same meaning, see McCarter 2003: 173 who reads *pbnm*, and compares with *pabn-*, the common Hurrian word for "mountain"; Lewis 2022: 383).

[18] Psalm 68: 16–17 "O majestic mountain, Mount Bashan; O jagged mountain, Mount Bashan; why so hostile, O jagged mountains, toward the mountain God desired as His dwelling. The LORD shall abide there forever" (The Jewish Study Bible); "A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; a mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan. Why look ye askance, ye mountains of peaks, at the mountain which God hath desired for His abode? Yea, the LORD will dwell therein for ever" (Mechon Mamre Translation https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2668.htm).

the visual variants of the anthropomorphic mountain, the god's mount, were known in Israel, possibly via miniature art such as the Megiddo ivory and seals (Yablonka 2006; Singer 2011: 581–582, 586–587, 591). In Israel the mountain gods survived as literary metaphors. Likewise, the connection between mountains (in the north) and the bull, distant echoes of the mountain-bull god Sharrumma, Teshub's son, was also familiar in Israel, and preserved in the poetry of Psalms 29: 6 "He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion (Hermon) like a young wild-ox."

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2003. Tali and friends at Carchemish station.